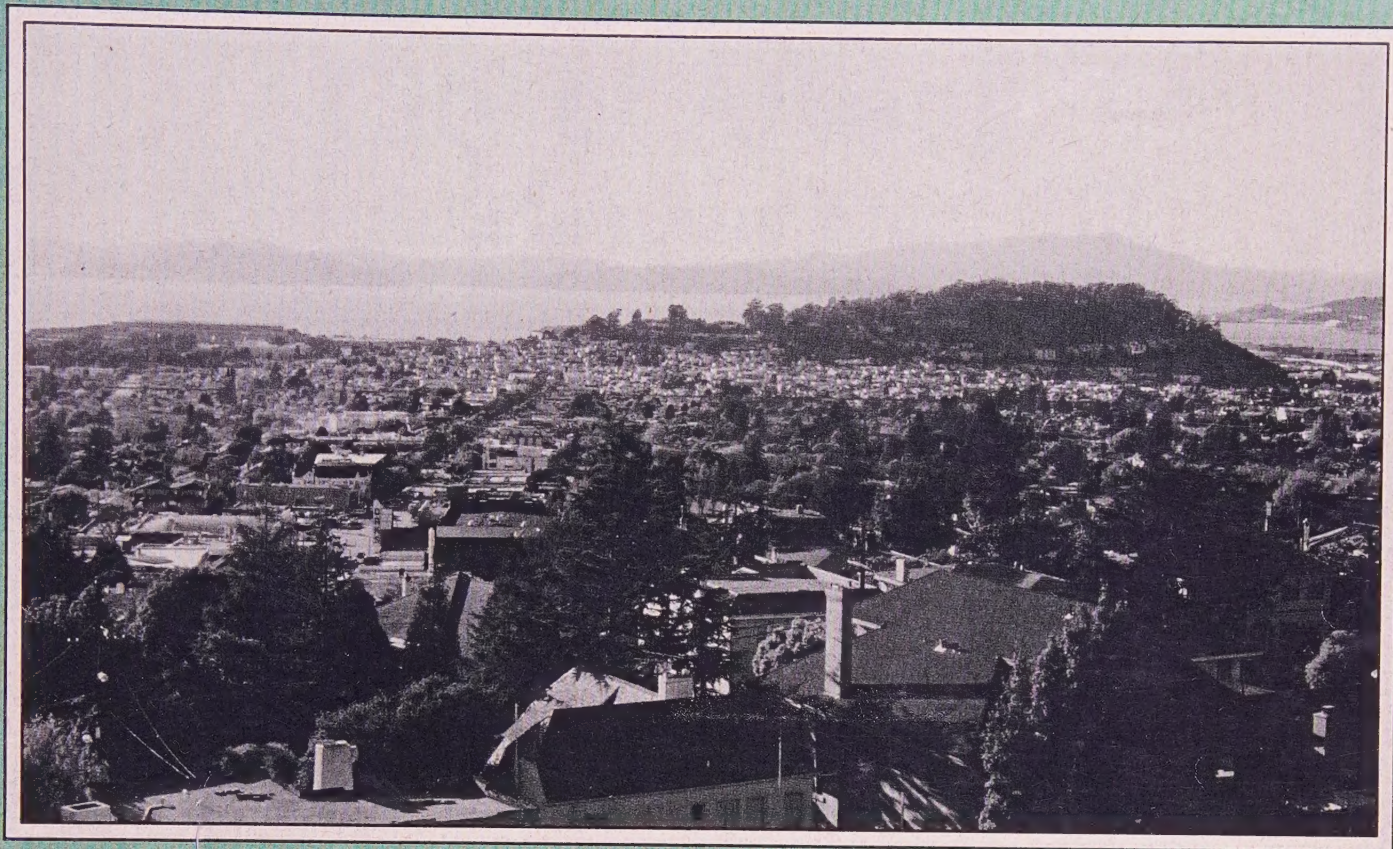


95 00817



INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL  
STUDIES LIBRARY

AUG 22 1995

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

# *Albany*

CALIFORNIA

*General Plan*

1990-2010





# **City of Albany**

## **General Plan And Final EIR**

**Adopted December 7, 1992**

# City of Albany

## General Plan And Final EIR

Adopted December 8, 1993



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### ALBANY CITY COUNCIL

William Cain  
Elizabeth Baker  
Mike Brodsky  
William Lewis

Robert Good  
Thelma Rubin  
Robert Nichols

### PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Jack Hogg  
Ann Berry  
Steven Barton

Robert Luoma  
Peter Michaels

### CITY STAFF

John Nachbar, City Administrator  
Daren Fields, Assistant City Administrator  
Claudia Cappio, Planning Director  
Ron Lefler, Public Works Director  
Mike Koepke, Fire Chief  
Larry Murdo, Police Chief  
Robert Zweben, City Attorney  
Kim Fletcher-Denton, City Treasurer

### CONSULTANTS

#### NEWMAN PLANNING ASSOCIATES

Lisa Newman, Principal  
Therese Brekke, Penelope Starr, Mike Foley; Associates  
*In Consultation With*  
Omni Means, Traffic Engineering  
Illingworth & Rodkin, Acoustical Consultants  
Antonnen & Hee, Geotechnical Consultants





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
PURPOSES OF THE GENERAL PLAN .....	1
LEGAL REQUIREMENTS .....	1
ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN .....	2
THE PLANNING PROCESS .....	2
RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CITY PLANS AND PLANNING PROJECTS .....	3
ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL PLAN AND FINAL EIR .....	3
<b>PLAN SUMMARY</b> .....	5
INTRODUCTION AND FUTURE ASSUMPTIONS .....	5
MAJOR POLICY FEATURES OF THE PLAN .....	5
Community Character and Housing .....	5
Protection of the Natural Environment .....	6
Concern for Public Health and Safety .....	6
Circulation .....	6
RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL AGENCY PLANS .....	6
ADOPTED GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS .....	7
<b>LAND USE ELEMENT</b> .....	23
INTRODUCTION .....	23
RESIDENTIAL LAND USE .....	23
Low Density, Single-Family Housing .....	24
Medium Density, Multi-Family Housing .....	24
High Density, Multi-Family Housing .....	25
Planned Residential Commercial .....	25
Albany Hill Planned Residential Development .....	26
Second Units .....	26
Residential in Commercial Districts .....	26
Population Density .....	27
RESIDENTIAL LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES .....	27
COMMERCIAL LAND USE .....	27
San Pablo Avenue General Commercial .....	27
Solano Avenue Community Commercial .....	28
COMMERCIAL LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES .....	29
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL LAND USE .....	30
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES .....	31

PUBLIC LAND USE .....	31
Public / Quasi Public Land Use .....	31
University of California Land .....	31
The United States Department of Agriculture Facility .....	32
PUBLIC LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES .....	32
OPEN SPACE .....	33
Public Open Space .....	33
Private Open Space .....	33
THE ALBANY WATERFRONT .....	33
COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES .....	34
Fire .....	34
Police .....	34
Schools .....	34
Recreation .....	35
Library .....	35
Corporation Yard .....	36
Medical .....	36
Solid Waste Management and Recycling .....	36
Water .....	36
Sewer .....	37
Gas & Electric .....	37
Cable TV .....	37
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES GOALS AND POLICIES .....	37
COMMUNITY DESIGN .....	38
Gateways and Edges .....	38
Views .....	38
Architecture .....	38
Landscaping .....	39
COMMUNITY DESIGN GOALS AND POLICIES .....	39
<b>CIRCULATION ELEMENT .....</b>	<b>41</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	41
CIRCULATION FACILITIES .....	41
Street Network .....	41
Transit Services .....	42
Bikeways .....	43
PARKING .....	44
TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS .....	44
MINIMIZING RELIANCE ON THE AUTOMOBILE .....	45
CIRCULATION GOALS AND POLICIES .....	45
<b>HOUSING ELEMENT .....</b>	<b>49</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	49



EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS .....	49
Brief Profile of Albany Housing .....	49
Population and Employment Trends .....	50
Housing Characteristics and Needs .....	51
Special Needs .....	55
Albany's Share of Regional Need For Low Income Housing .....	57
RESTRAINTS ON SOLUTIONS TO HOUSING NEEDS .....	57
Governmental Constraints .....	57
Non-Governmental Constraints On Solutions to Housing Needs .....	61
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES .....	62
Infill Opportunities .....	62
Redevelopment Opportunities .....	64
Manufactured Housing .....	66
Conservation of Affordable Housing .....	66
RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES .....	66
PROGRESS EVALUATION .....	66
HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS (1990-95) .....	70
<b>CONSERVATION, RECREATION, &amp; OPEN SPACE ELEMENT .....</b>	<b>77</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	77
ALBANY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT .....	77
Geology .....	77
Hydrology, Water Quality, and Erosion .....	78
Climate & Air Quality .....	79
Vegetation & Wildlife .....	80
Archeological Resources .....	80
Albany's Creeks .....	81
The Albany Waterfront .....	82
Albany Hill .....	83
CONSERVATION GOALS AND POLICIES .....	83
RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE .....	84
Strategies to Increase Parkland and Open Space Areas in Albany .....	85
Park Facilities .....	86
Community Facilities .....	87
Albany School District Facilities .....	87
Joint Use Facilities .....	88
Other Community Facilities .....	88
Recreation Programs .....	88
Community Service Programs .....	88
Other Community Programs .....	89
Future Park & Recreation Development .....	90
Pathways .....	91
RECREATION, PARK AND OPEN SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES .....	92

<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY ELEMENT</b> .....	95
INTRODUCTION .....	95
FLOODING .....	95
SEISMIC HAZARDS .....	96
FIRE HAZARDS .....	97
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS .....	97
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS .....	98
CRIME PREVENTION .....	99
NOISE .....	99
COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY GOALS AND POLICIES .....	100
 <b>GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	103
INTRODUCTION .....	103
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS .....	103
Review and Amendments To The Zoning Ordinance .....	103
Review of the Subdivision Ordinance .....	104
Development Review Procedures .....	104
Specific Plans and Special Studies .....	104
Albany Hill .....	104
San Pablo Avenue .....	104
The Waterfront Area .....	105
Other Programs .....	105
Capital Improvement Program .....	105
MONITORING AND AMENDING THE GENERAL PLAN .....	105
Monitoring General Plan Implementation .....	105
General Plan Amendment Process .....	105
 <b>REFERENCE</b> .....	109
STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS .....	109
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	110
Individual References .....	110
Document References .....	111
GLOSSARY .....	113

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Albany Population Age .....	51
Age of Housing Units .....	52
1992 Housing Conditions .....	52
Vacancy Rates & Household Size .....	53
Projected Mean Income 1980-2000 .....	53
1990 Income Guidelines .....	53
Households Overpaying for Housing (1990) .....	54
Albany's Projected Housing Need by Income Category .....	57



Albany Residential Zoning/Development Standards .....	58
Representative Multi-Family Housing Projects 1980-90 .....	58
1991 Development Fee Comparison .....	59
1991 Approximate City Permit Costs .....	60
Monthly Payment and Income Needed at Various Interest Rates (1990) .....	62
Potential Sites for Residential Development .....	63
Proportion of Albany's 1988-1995 Housing Need Expected to be Met Through Housing element Programs .....	72
General Plan Implementation Program Schedule 1993-1995 .....	106

## **General Plan Maps**

All Plan Maps are located at the end of the Element or Section indicated.

1. Regional Location (Plan Summary)
2. Land Use Plan 1990 - 2010 (Land Use Element)
3. 1989 Peak Hour Congestion (Circulation Element)
4. Circulation Plan (Circulation Element)
5. Housing Opportunities (Housing Element)
6. Conservation/Open Space Plan (Conservation, Recreation & Open Space Element)
7. Environmental Hazards (Community Health & Safety Element)

## **Technical Appendices**

The Technical Appendices are a separate document available at Albany City Hall.

- A. Final Environmental Impact Report
- B. Seismic Safety
- C. Noise
- D. California Archeological Inventory
- E. Albany Land Use Inventory
- F. Public Workshop Summary Reports
- G. Policy Direction Report
- H. Resolution No. 92-87
- I. Resolution No. 92-88











# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSES OF THE GENERAL PLAN

This update and revision of the Albany General Plan replaces the former plan which was adopted after a major General Plan revision program between 1973 and 1975. Although the former plan was amended subsequently on several occasions, the data, contents, and policies had largely become outdated. State law requires that a General Plan be comprehensively reviewed and updated in order to maintain its usefulness as a policy guide for future planning and decision making. The City initiated this Update program in 1989 to:

- 1) Respond to any changed conditions since the previous General Plan;
- 2) Consolidate available data and information;
- 3) Respond to the current requirements of State law concerning General Plan content;
- 4) Identify and address current community concerns and potential future planning issues affecting the community;
- 5) Provide an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of community goals and policies regarding land use and development;
- 6) Establish a sound and comprehensive basis for zoning and other regulatory measures that can be used to implement the General Plan;
- 7) Provide a foundation for the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), parkland dedication fees, and other possible impact fees and exactions.

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Like all cities and counties in California, the City of Albany is required to prepare and adopt a general plan. The California Government

Code defines specifically the purpose and content of general plans. Primarily, State law requires that a general plan be a comprehensive, long-term plan for the physical development of the jurisdiction. It must be an integrated, internally consistent document with analysis and data supporting the proposed policies and actions of the Plan.

In fulfillment of the requirement that the Plan be long-term in scope, the 1990 Albany General Plan encompasses a 20-year time frame, 1990-2010.

Several topics, or Plan Elements, must be addressed in a general plan. These include land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, safety, and noise. The level of detail in each element should reflect local conditions and circumstances.

In addition to the requirements of California Planning Law, the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) also apply to the preparation of a general plan. To meet these requirements, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared. This document provides environmental information about the City which may serve as a "Master EIR" for future development proposals. The City will use this information base to determine whether individual projects, both public and private, will require additional environmental analysis. The General Plan EIR also provides an analysis of cumulative impacts (such as traffic, noise air quality, water quality, etc.) which may limit the need for additional EIRs for public and private projects that are consistent with the Plan. The General Plan Final EIR is part of the Technical Appendix to this Plan.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Plan includes five Elements that address the seven required topics pursuant to State Law: Land Use; Circulation; Housing; Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space; and Community Health and Safety. The Community Health and Safety Element includes a discussion of noise. Each Element includes information and analysis (expressed in tables, figures, and maps) and concludes with statements of goals and policies to achieve them. Three of the general plan maps are expressions of general plan policy: the Land Use Plan, the Circulation Plan, and the Conservation and Open Space Plan.

The Implementation chapter identifies the various techniques and strategies available to the City to achieve General Plan goals. In addition, a chart is provided which identifies a time period for implementation of each General Plan policy or program.

The Summary chapter contains a list of goals and policies and evaluates the relationship of this Plan to the general plans of surrounding cities and Alameda County. The Reference section identifies where State mandated information can be found in the Plan, provides a glossary of terms and a bibliography.

The Technical Appendix includes the Final EIR for the General Plan; technical reports prepared on the topics of Seismic Safety, Noise and Archeology; an inventory of existing land use in Albany; summary reports of three public workshops held during the plan preparation process; the Policy Direction Report, published in 1989 and the City Council Resolutions certifying the Final EIR and adopting the General Plan. Copies of the Technical Appendix are available for reference in the Albany Planning Department and the Albany Library. Copies are also available for purchase at Albany City Hall.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

This General Plan was prepared by Newman Planning Associates under the direction of the Albany Planning Director. Assistance was received from the managers and staff of all of the City's departments, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and other City Committees and Commissions. Information was collected from the City, other local agencies, State agencies, and the State codes and guidelines governing general plans. The Reference section of the plan identifies the individuals and sources consulted in the preparation of this Plan.

Citizen participation was an important part of the General Plan preparation process. The primary means for receiving the ideas and concerns of Albany residents was through a series of three public workshops. These workshops, held in January through March, 1989, covered the topics of General Plan goals, issues and alternatives, and policies.

A "Policy Direction Report," included in the Technical Appendix, was prepared by the City Planning staff and consultants. This report presented the major goals and policies proposed to be included in the Plan. It was reviewed by citizens at the third workshop and during two subsequent Planning and Zoning Commission hearings. Each of the City's Commissions and Committees (Waterfront Committee, Traffic and Safety Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission, Arts Commission, and Childcare Committee) also reviewed and commented on the Policy Direction Report.

Announcements in the City's "Newsette," which is sent to all of Albany's households, as well as local newspaper articles about the General Plan update process also served to inform and encourage citizen participation. In addition, a series of public notices were sent to a mailing list of over 200 interested citizens, groups, and other public agencies.



## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CITY PLANS AND PLANNING PROJECTS**

In 1978, the City of Albany adopted the Albany Hill Area Specific Plan. This plan was prepared to implement the 1975 Albany General Plan's policies to guide development of private lands so that Albany Hill's natural resources and character would be protected. The 1990 Albany General Plan is largely consistent with the Albany Hill Area Specific Plan in that both plans call for the ridgetop to be preserved as open space and that future development should incorporate planned development concepts to minimize adverse impacts.

Two major inconsistencies exist, however, between the two plans. First, the Albany Hill Area Specific Plan permits greater development densities (12-18 dwelling units per acre) than the 1990 General Plan (6-9 dwelling units per acre on parcels larger than 20,000 square feet and 1 unit on smaller parcels). In April, 1994, Albany voters passed Measure K which reduced the permitted hillside residential densities. The Revised General Plan is consistent with this changed development potential for Albany Hill. Secondly, the existing Specific Plan contains a different route for bicycle access to Albany Hill than the new Circulation Plan. A policy to review the Albany Hill Area Specific Plan and bring it into conformance with the revised Albany General Plan is contained in the Land Use Element.

The City has been reviewing various proposals for new development at the Albany Waterfront since 1985. A Program Environmental Impact Report about the impacts of six possible waterfront development alternatives was certified by the City Council in 1990.

The revised General Plan continues the Commercial Recreation land use designation for the Waterfront area and assumes that it will remain unchanged throughout the planning period.

This assumption was made for two reasons. First, the City is undertaking a separate planning process for the Albany Waterfront lands. The City Council, in undertaking the General Plan Revision and Update Program in 1988, clearly established that the waterfront planning process and the Citywide General Plan revision would proceed on separate but parallel tracks. This separation was further highlighted in 1990 with the passage of a ballot initiative that requires a vote prior to final adoption of General Plan amendments, Zoning Ordinance amendments, a Specific Plan or a development agreement pertaining to the Albany Waterfront.

Second, the City Council decided to update and revise its General Plan regardless of the outcome of the Albany Waterfront planning process in order to be consistent with both current community desires and State law requirements.

## **ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL PLAN AND FINAL EIR**

The City of Albany's General Plan Update and Revision Program was initiated to respond to State law changes, update information, and revise goals and policies and objectives to be more reflective of current conditions and community values.

A Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) were published in November, 1991. Public Workshops before the Planning and Zoning Commission were held in 1991 and 1992 to review the major information and policies in the Plan. Public hearings to take public comments about the plan were also held in 1992. Revisions to the Draft General Plan and Final EIR were published in the Fall of 1992 and additional public hearings were held by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. Final adoption of the General Plan and Final EIR by the City Council occurred

on December 7, 1992. The City Council's action to certify that the Final EIR complies with the California Environmental Quality Act is contained in Resolution 92-87. The Council's action to adopt the General Plan and make required legal findings is contained in Resolution No. 92-88. Copies of both resolutions are included in the Technical Appendix. The Technical Appendix is a separate document from the General Plan. Copies of the Technical Appendix as well as public hearing minutes are available at Albany City Hall.

In April, 1993, the State Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) completed its review of the adopted Albany General Plan Housing Element and certified that it is consistent with State housing element law.









# PLAN SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION AND FUTURE ASSUMPTIONS

This General Plan provides Albany with citywide goals for the next 20 years and lays out policies and programs to achieve these long term goals. It supersedes the 1975 Albany General Plan and its subsequent amendments. Decisions made by the City Council, and the Planning and Zoning Commission about Albany's physical development should derive from, and be correlated with these goals, policies and programs.

Because Albany is to a large extent already built up, this Plan deals not so much with new development as with the possibilities for achieving goals within existing development.

Some of the major assumptions of this Plan are as follows:

- 1) Albany will continue to be a predominantly residential community, with a very high percentage of its residents commuting elsewhere for employment.
- 2) The limited supply of land, and the high demand for it, will maintain the high prices now experienced for both existing housing and buildable sites, thus making it difficult to increase the supply of low and moderate income housing in Albany.
- 3) Solano and San Pablo Avenues will continue to serve as Albany's commercial areas with Solano being primarily locally-serving and pedestrian-oriented and San Pablo being primarily auto-oriented.
- 4) The University of California will continue to own the Gill Tract property, and the University will pursue a comprehensive

redevelopment plan for University Village to increase the amount of student housing and to improve other Village facilities.

- 5) The Waterfront land will continue to be operated as a racetrack at least until 2002. If the owners of the land wish to develop their property in uses other than those allowed by the Waterfront Commercial Recreation use, a series of general plan amendments must be submitted, considered, and approved by the City and the Albany voters prior to final adoption.
- 6) The City of Albany, like most municipal governments, will continue to struggle to find funds for capital facilities and improvements.
- 7) Traffic on I-80 and I-580 will continue to increase possibly by as much as 46% by the year 2000, thus causing severe delays and congestion. Due to lack of funding, there may not be any reconstruction of I-80 or the Buchanan/I-80/I-580 interchange until 1997 or later.

## MAJOR POLICY FEATURES OF THE PLAN

The main policy features of the Plan are as follows:

### Community Character and Housing

At the public workshops and through written comments from residents, support was strongly expressed for maintaining the existing small town, residential scale of Albany. Many residents fear that increasing density of development would exacerbate parking problems, and diminish the quality of public services. At the same time, there was concern that rising housing costs would make Albany inaccessible to young people and families with children.

The Plan takes these concerns into account by including policies to study Albany Hill densities, reconsider a more flexible Parking Ordinance to reduce parking as a constraint to affordable housing development, and emphasize and support the necessity for maintaining high public services.

Although increasing residential density is a time-honored method of making housing more affordable to a greater number of people, it is widely recognized that Albany is already a very densely settled community. Thus, the Plan elects to use methods such as encouragement of second units, provision of density bonuses and requirement of inclusionary housing to achieve affordable housing goals.

### **Protection of the Natural Environment**

Although most of Albany's available land has already been developed, the Plan makes suggestions for enhancing and protecting the environment through programs to restore the creeks as a public amenity, plant street trees, and strengthen environmental safeguards.

### **Concern for Public Health and Safety**

The Plan pays particular attention to seismic safety, because Albany is so close to a known fault line. It also presents policies addressing other geologic hazards, as well as policies addressing flooding, hazardous materials, disaster preparedness, and fire prevention. The Plan identifies methods for avoiding or mitigating the impacts of hazards.

### **Circulation**

Because parking emerged as a major concern in the public workshops, several of the Plan's policies focus on this issue. Policies in the Plan address the possibility of reducing the two-spaces-per-unit residential parking requirement for seniors, who, on average, have fewer cars than the general population. Policies also suggest methods for alleviating the encroachment of commercial parking into residential areas and the necessity for increased parking capacity on Solano and San Pablo Avenues. Additional policies concern traffic improvements at congested intersections.

Development of a comprehensive bicycle path system is suggested for both recreational purposes and to increase the use of bicycles as an alternative to automobiles.

Due to the delay and changes to the plans for rebuilding the I-80/I-580/Buchanan Interchange, the Plan specifies three primary goals for this entrance to the City:

- 1) Improved seismic safety;
- 2) Improved operational safety; and
- 3) Improved pedestrian and bicycle access to the Waterfront area.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL AGENCY PLANS**

Local agencies are requested, when formulating General Plans, to look at the implications for their planning area of regional plans, the General Plan of the County in which they are located, and neighboring cities. While it is possible to formulate a General Plan without regard to the plans of other jurisdictions, such a procedure would negate one of the most important features of planning, which is the management of growth: its location, amount,

timing, type, and coordination with infrastructure improvements.

The regional and local agencies to be considered in the context of this Plan include Alameda County and the cities of El Cerrito and Berkeley and Richmond.

For planning purposes, Alameda County is divided into four subareas. Albany is in the Central Metropolitan subarea, which adopted its Plan in January, 1981. A review of this Plan affirmed consistency between the policies of the new Albany General Plan and those of the County for this subarea.

Two areas of particular County interest in Albany's plans have been identified. One is the future development of Albany Point. The County is in agreement with plans for Albany Point Park. A second area of County interest is redevelopment planning. This is because a city's redevelopment plans can have negative fiscal impacts on the County. The Albany General Plan makes no recommendation for pursuing redevelopment or for defining a redevelopment district.

The El Cerrito General Plan was adopted in 1975. A Housing Element was adopted in 1986. A review of the 1975 Plan, including the 1986 Housing Element, affirmed that there is no inconsistency between El Cerrito's Plan and Albany's.

Like Albany, El Cerrito is a predominately residential community, although its housing densities are lower than those of Albany. Minimum lot sizes are larger and parking standards are not as strict. Although two spaces per unit are required for single-family residences, the requirement for multi-family dwellings is 1.5 spaces per unit.

An area of common concern between El Cerrito and Albany is the development of San Pablo Avenue. Of particular interest is the height limit

for buildings. In Albany, the present height limit for buildings on San Pablo is 45 feet. The height limit on San Pablo in El Cerrito is 35 feet, but higher buildings have been approved through the City's variance procedure.

The Berkeley General Plan was adopted in 1977 and a draft Update was underway at the time Albany's Draft General Plan Update was published in 1991. The Policy Direction Report prepared as part of the Albany General Plan Update was reviewed by the Berkeley Planning Department for its impact on Berkeley and consistency with Berkeley's planning goals. In general, there were no inconsistencies noted. Berkeley would like to work with Albany on six areas of mutual concern: commercial development on Solano Avenue, affordable housing, traffic loads on San Pablo and Gilman Avenues, the use of the University of California properties in Albany, urban design issues, and East Bay Shoreline Park planning along both city's waterfront areas.

## **ADOPTED GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

The adopted goals, policies and programs have been extracted from each General Plan Element and collected here for ease of reference.

### **LAND USE ELEMENT**

**Goal LU 1: Preserve and enhance the residential character of Albany.**

#### **Policies:**

LU 1.1. Maintain existing residential densities throughout Albany. Consider reducing the permitted residential densities on Albany Hill in response to concerns about the steep topography, related soils and drainage problems, parking and street capacity, and protection of



view corridors. (This required voter approval to amend the 12-18 units/acre density range established by Measure D in 1978.)

LU 1.2. Establish zoning standards for areas designated Planned Residential Commercial (PRC) to support redevelopment of under-utilized commercial areas for mixed use particularly along San Pablo Avenue.

LU 1.3. Encourage development of secondary dwelling units, balancing the need for increased housing with the need to provide adequate parking and protection of existing neighborhood character.

**Goal LU 2: Encourage and upgrade commercial development along San Pablo Avenue in order to expand the City's economic base.**

**Policies:**

LU 2.1. Evaluate the economic importance of existing auto-oriented uses and their need for larger sites with better freeway access than can be found on San Pablo Avenue.

LU 2.2. Establish design guidelines for commercial facades, landscaping, and public improvements along the San Pablo Avenue corridor, based upon the San Pablo Avenue Design Guideline Study.

LU 2.3. Consider various public improvements for San Pablo Avenue, as outlined in the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Design Guideline and Public Improvement Study. Incorporate a program for these improvements into the 1995-2000 City Capital Improvement Program.

LU 2.4. Consider and establish a funding mechanism in order to develop municipal parking facilities to meet increased parking demand.

LU 2.5. Permit a moderate increase in new commercial development intensity to a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.95. This intensity may be exceeded when a comprehensive traffic study prepared for a specific project proposal indicates that additional capacity can be created along San Pablo Avenue to accommodate additional traffic.

**Goal LU 3: Restrict conversion of residential uses to commercial uses along specific blocks of Kains and Adams Streets where residential uses predominate and permit such conversions where commercial uses predominate.**

**Policies:**

LU 3.1. Establish a commercial land use designation and revise the Commercial Expansion Zoning District to allow commercial uses on blocks which are now predominately in commercial use. Designate and rezone those blocks for residential use which are now predominately residential.

LU 3.2. Strengthen design standards for those blocks of Kains and Adams designated for commercial use, including requirements for landscaping, minimum setbacks, fences, and screening of storage areas and mechanical equipment.

LU 3.3. Discourage or prevent the use of Kains and Adams for primary access to non-residential uses.

LU 3.4. Consider more stringent regulation of parking on portions of Kains and Adams Streets and adjacent residential streets, including timed parking or parking permits.

**Goal LU 4: Maintain and promote a mix of commercial uses on Solano Avenue that serves the community.**

**Policies:**

LU 4.1. Permit a moderate increase in new commercial development intensity to a maximum FAR of 1.25. This intensity may be exceeded when a comprehensive traffic study indicates that it is feasible to create additional capacity along Solano Avenue to accommodate increased traffic.

LU 4.2. Maintain and strengthen the existing pedestrian character of Solano Avenue, particularly by encouraging retail and service uses on the ground floor level of buildings and limiting office uses except for the upper levels.

LU 4.3. Establish stronger design criteria that consider appropriate building scale, architecture and orientation to the street.

LU 4.4. Consider and establish a funding mechanism for developing municipal parking facilities to meet increased parking demand.

LU 4.5. Actively encourage the appropriate future use of the School District-owned library site on Solano Avenue, giving consideration to its impact upon the commercial and pedestrian environment of Solano Avenue.

LU 4.6. Enhance and develop public spaces along Solano Avenue, including the area in front of the old Albany Library. Consider replacing the existing Kiosk with a better designed and maintained structure for posting notices and providing public information.

**Goal LU 5: Protect residential neighborhoods from the adverse impacts of adjacent commercial uses through the creation of a transition area along Solano Avenue cross streets.**

**Policies:**

LU 5.1. Evaluate the existing commercial uses along Solano and their relationship to the adjacent residential zone on a block-by-block basis. Establish a transition zone where appropriate and consider regulating such factors as hours of operation, types of use, traffic and parking demand.

LU 5.2. Develop use, design, and noise standards and requirements for this transition area.

**Goal LU 6: Increase the economic vitality of the City's industrial use areas.**

**Policies:**

LU 6.1. Identify appropriate locations for automobile retail and service uses in the areas zoned for Commercial/Service/Light Industrial uses. Develop appropriate informational materials to encourage San Pablo Avenue auto dealerships and auto-related businesses to consider these locations.

**Goal LU 7: Ensure that future redevelopment of the University of California lands is compatible with the City's long-term land use, public services, and public facilities goals.**

**Policies:**

LU 7.1. Designate the UC lands along the San Pablo Avenue frontage and a portion of Buchanan Street at the intersection of San Pablo for commercial retail and compatible uses. Incorporate the recommendations in the San Pablo Avenue Design Guideline and Public Improvement Study as part of this effort. In addition, consider preserving a portion of the Gill Tract, particularly those portions with important and significant stands of trees, as open space when any re-use of this area is proposed.

LU 7.2. Participate actively in the UC Master Plan process for redevelopment of the Gill Tract and Albany Village. Specific concerns that must be addressed in this process include but are not limited to:

- A. Coordinated planning efforts for the City's, University's, and Albany School District's park, recreation, and open space lands to improve public access, improve parking capacity, increase use, and improve overall traffic safety in the area for students, pedestrians and automobiles.
- B. Protect and enhance the creeks running through and adjacent to the U.C. Village property.
- C. Protect and preserve the important stands of trees on the site.
- D. Specify and reach new agreements with the University for financial and/or in-kind support of City infrastructure, services and

capital facilities that are used by U.C. Village, including but not limited to sanitary and storm sewers, public safety services, public streets, and parks and open spaces.

- E. Focus on redeveloping the housing units at U.C. Village to meet the current and future needs of its residents for a family-oriented project with adequate community and recreational facilities that are better integrated with the City.
- F. Evaluate the overall parking capacity within the Village versus the existing and future patterns of usage, and the use of on-street parking spaces outside the Village that are used by University students.

**Goal LU 8: Maintain and improve Albany's high quality educational system and other public services.**

**Policies:**

LU 8.1. Evaluate the potential impacts of future major development proposals upon Albany's schools, police, fire and emergency services, and park and recreational facilities.

LU 8.2. Continue to require appropriate public service and facility impact mitigation programs, including fees upon new development and expansions to existing development, in order to maintain and improve the quality of Albany's public services and facilities.

LU 8.3. Construct a new corporation yard facility to adequately house the City's maintenance equipment and workers.

LU 8.4. Take actions to improve the level and quality of Cable T.V. programming and service through potential changes to Federal Laws and better response by Century Cable.



LU 8.5. Assist and support the School District in its efforts to improve existing school facilities and provide for expanding enrollments.

**Goal LU 9: The positive elements of Albany's physical character: common architectural styles, significant views, and remaining natural features should be protected and enhanced.**

**Policies:**

LU 9.1. Retain the historic character of Solano Avenue as a local-serving, pedestrian-oriented shopping district. Special amenities such as outdoor seating and landscaping should be encouraged in the Design Review Ordinance, and considered as part of the Capital Improvements Program.

LU 9.2. Develop policies to protect existing riparian habitat within the Creek Conservation Zone and restrict development in this Zone appropriately (see Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Element Policies).

LU 9.3. Develop a comprehensive street tree planting program (see Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Element Policies).

LU 9.4. Designate the entire crest of Albany Hill for permanent open space use and seek public dedication of these lands at the time of private development proposals through the City's Subdivision Ordinance.

LU 9.5. Provide for the timely implementation of the future public improvements study for San Pablo Avenue through the City's Capital Improvements Program budget.

LU 9.6. Identify the City's "Gateways" on the Land Use Map and develop appropriate

architectural design and land use policies for the parcels which comprise the vicinity of the gateways. Develop a gateway improvement program that includes signage, landscaping, and other public improvements suitable for these important entry points.

## **CIRCULATION ELEMENT**

**Goal CIR 1: Preserve the character of residential areas near and on arterial streets.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 1.1. Evaluate the traffic and circulation along Kains and Adams Streets. Take advantage of San Pablo Avenue or an east-west street for primary access. Discourage or prevent the use of Kains and Adams for primary access to non-residential uses.

CIRC 1.2. Delete the designation of "minor arterial" for Cornell Avenue.

CIRC 1.3. Support staging and careful scheduling of I-80 corridor improvements to reduce traffic diversion onto City streets.

CIRC 1.4. Concentrate East/West through traffic along Marin and Solano Avenues, and discourage such traffic from Washington and Portland.

CIRC 1.5. Concentrate North/South through-traffic along Masonic, Key Route and Santa Fe (all east of San Pablo Avenue).

CIRC 1.6. Redesignate the following streets:

A. Jackson Street between Solano Avenue and the northerly terminus: downgrade from "Minor Arterial" to "Collector";

B. Washington Avenue between Cleveland Avenue and Jackson Street: downgrade from “Minor Arterial” to “Local”;

C. Solano Avenue between San Pablo Avenue to East City Limit: upgrade from “Collector” to “Major Arterial”;

CIRC 1.7. Review and consider the use of roadway features such as speed bumps, traffic diverters, and other methods to limit through traffic and high speeds on residential streets. This tool should be considered on a City-wide basis and potential impacts to adjacent streets due to changing travel patterns should be fully addressed.

**Goal CIRC 2: Protect residential neighborhoods from excessive parking demands.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 2.1. Evaluate the on-street parking use and capacity along Kains and Adams and consider more stringent regulation including timed parking or parking permits. Similarly, consider the potential impacts of more stringent parking regulation on adjacent residential streets.

CIRC 2.2. Evaluate the impacts of increased parking demand on streets adjacent to Solano Avenue. Consider the potential impacts of more stringent parking regulation on nearby residential streets.

CIRC 2.3. Evaluate the impacts of overflow parking from the University Village on adjacent streets and private parking areas. Consider more stringent parking regulation plus agreement with the University of California to provide more on-site parking or take steps to limit car ownership by residents.

**Goal CIRC 3: Maintain adequate circulation throughout the City and improve the parking capacity on Solano and San Pablo Avenues.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 3.1. Monitor critical intersections (e.g., Buchanan/Jackson, Buchanan/San Pablo, Solano/San Pablo, Marin/Santa Fe, Marin/Key Route) for indications of necessary traffic improvements. Develop specific improvement plans to reduce impacts of increased traffic and incorporate into the City's Capital Improvements Plan.

CIRC 3.2. Conduct more detailed studies to address the traffic effects and needed improvements associated with specific development proposals.

CIRC 3.3. Establish funding mechanisms to acquire and develop municipal parking facilities in the City's commercial areas along Solano and San Pablo Avenue, including an in-lieu fee for new development, expansion/intensification of existing commercial uses, or major change of use, as parcels become available.

CIRC 3.4. Coordinate street and freeway improvements with other jurisdictions as well as with CalTrans.

**Goal CIRC 4: Support public transit, and other means to reduce reliance on the automobile as the primary means of transportation.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 4.1. Monitor existing and proposed transit service for responsiveness to residents' and employers' needs.

CIRC 4.2. Encourage the continuation of para-transit services operated through the Albany Senior Center.

CIRC 4.3. Continue to work with the City's Trip Reduction Ordinance and continue to develop programs and incentives for the use of carpools, staggered work hours, bicycling, walking and the increased use of public transit for residents and employees in the community.

CIRC 4.4. Assure that the shuttle service between Albany Village and the UC Campus is maintained.

CIRC 4.5 Increase pedestrian travel throughout the City by connecting major pathway systems such as the BART linear park to other City, regional, and State Parks, and other community facilities.

CIRC 4.6 Increase disabled access throughout the City by installing curb cuts wherever feasible as part of new construction, repair or improvements to streets, sidewalks, pathways and trails.

CIRC 4.7 Assure that sidewalks, pathways and trails used by pedestrians are safe and provide unhindered access for all.

**Goal CIRC 5: Ensure that the I-80 reconstruction project meets the City's goals for improved earthquake safety on the Buchanan / I - 80 / 580 interchange and the Buchanan Street overpass, improved automobile safety of the interchange, improved pedestrian and bicycle safety of the interchange, and improved access to the Albany Waterfront.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 5.1. Continue to monitor the I-80 reconstruction project plans and work with CalTrans to include earthquake safety, automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian safety and Waterfront access in any new plans.

CIRC 5.2. Coordinate the planning and development of the Bay Trail in Albany with the overall access and safety improvements to the Buchanan/I-80-580 interchange.

CIRC 5.3. Accept ramp metering of the Buchanan/I-80 interchange only if operational safety improvements are completed simultaneously and full analysis of level of service and other traffic-related impacts to Golden Gate Fields Racetrack are completed and considered.

**Goal CIRC 6: Improve and enhance the City's bicycle route and path system.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 6.1. Develop a plan for bike routes for Albany, linking existing bike paths and routes in Berkeley and El Cerrito. Implement this plan as part of the City's overall road maintenance and traffic sign program within the annual capital



projects budget, as well as through specific transportation funding.

CIRC 6.2 Work to obtain funding sources to develop the Bay Trail in Albany and along the entire East Bay Shoreline corridor as an alternative, parallel route to I-80.

## HOUSING ELEMENT

**Goal HE 1: Preserve, maintain and improve Albany's existing housing stock.**

### Policies and Programs:

**Policy HE 1.1:** *Continue to participate in housing rehabilitation programs and pursue other funding to rehabilitate older housing and, where feasible, to retain a supply of low- and moderate-income housing units. Existing affordable housing in Albany should be conserved. Albany's affordable housing includes the 920 student housing units in the U.C. Albany Village, 103 existing legal second units, the 245 units in the commercial area on Solano and San Pablo Avenues, and the estimated 1226 units in apartment buildings with more than 10 units. It should be noted that some of the 245 units on Solano Avenue are in apartment buildings of 10 or more units.*

**Program HE 1.1:** Continue to work with the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department for the housing rehabilitation program and the minor home repair program.

**Policy HE 1.2:** *Continue to limit conversion of existing multi-family residential units to condominiums. Limited equity cooperatives and other innovative housing proposals which are affordable to low and moderate income households are encouraged.*

**Program HE 1.2.:** Amend the condominium conversion ordinance to allow limited equity cooperatives.

**Policy HE 1.3** *Strengthen programs to upgrade and maintain a safe and sound housing stock.*

**Program HE 1.3.1:** Maintain building and housing code enforcement programs and follow-up on housing code and other safety violations.

**Program HE 1.3.2:** Expand the current Fire Department rental unit fire code program to include other primary health and safety problems.

**Policy HE 1.4:** *Encourage construction of new rental housing.*

**Program HE 1.4:** Develop a public information program to inform the public and development community regarding availability of County and other agency funding for construction of rental housing.

**Goal HE 2: Provide a variety of housing types, densities, designs and prices which will meet the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community while maintaining and enhancing the character of existing development.**

### Policies and Programs:

**Policy HE 2.1:** *Encourage the construction of housing affordable to very low, low and moderate income households consistent with the regional fair share goals and income levels of current and future Albany residents.*

**Program HE 2.1.1:** Develop and provide a program of incentives such as reduced development fees, assistance with public improvements, priority in permit processing to

encourage the development of very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing.

**Program HE 2.1.2:** Develop and provide a program requiring inclusionary housing for proposed developments of ten or more units. The inclusionary housing program should require 15% of proposed units to be made affordable to low-income households. This program will be appropriate for mixed commercial/high-density housing redevelopment projects in the PRC district.

**Program HE 2.1.3:** Enact a density bonus ordinance consistent with State law requirements.

**Program HE 2.1.4:** Reestablish the City's financial commitment to participate in the County HCD Mortgage Credit Certificate program during 1992-93. This will enable certificates to be allocated to moderate-income first-time home buyers for the Hill Lumber redevelopment project. Continue the City's involvement in the future as appropriate to obtain certificates for other housing redevelopment projects.

**Program HE 2.1.5:** Develop a Housing Opportunities Public Information Campaign to disseminate information to Albany residents and business and commercial property owners to better inform the public about a variety of housing programs and opportunities. Typical Campaign actions would include publication and distribution of flyers, posters placed on kiosks and public places, information in the Albany Newsette, among other ideas. The following types of housing needs and programs should be incorporated into the Public Information Campaign in addition to others identified as appropriate by the Planning Director:

A. Encourage development of rental units in commercial districts through an active

marketing program for commercial property owners;

B. Provide information about existing City policy to encourage development of new second units;

C. Increase public awareness about County HCD Housing Preservation Programs and the pilot weatherization program with PG&E during 1993 as well as Operation Sentinel;

D. Inform the development community about the new Inclusionary housing program and opportunities for increased density through Density bonuses.

E. Inform the public about the Mortgage Credit Certificate Program which assists first-time home buyers.

F. Survey and publicize a list of housing units that meet the needs of disabled persons.

**Program HE 2.1.6:** Sponsor a ballot measure to revise the two space/unit residential parking requirement established by Measure D (1978). This revision will recommend more proportional ways to calculate parking requirements (e.g., based upon unit size, number of bedrooms, unit type and the population served, such as special exemptions for senior housing, proximity to transit, or available land for parking in the immediate neighborhood).

**Policy HE 2.2:** *Review zoning densities and development standards on Albany Hill to protect the character and natural qualities of the hill and strengthen environmental protection.*

**Program HE 2.2:** Review and revise the Albany Hill Specific Plan with particular emphasis on permitted densities, hillside development standards, and reducing environmental impacts.

**Policy HE 2.3:** *Revise the C-E District boundaries to reduce the potential conversion of residential units for commercial use.*

**Program HE 2.3:** Delete the C-E Zoning District designation from the eight blocks along Kains and Adams streets which are predominately in residential use. The zoning designation for these blocks shall be R-3.

**Policy HE 2.4:** *Encourage development of secondary dwelling units, balancing the need for increased affordable housing with the need to provide parking and protection of existing neighborhood character.*

**Policy HE 2.5:** *Encourage development of rental housing above commercial development along Solano Avenue.*

**Goal HE 3:** **Expand housing opportunities for the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, and other persons with special housing needs.**

#### **Policies and Programs:**

**Program 3.1:** Participate in and support Alameda County and State-wide efforts to increase the available funding for senior housing projects.

**Program HE 3.2.1:** Revise the Zoning Ordinance to require a percentage of new units in multi-family or townhouse projects be accessible to disabled residents, consistent with State and Federal requirements, particularly the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Program HE 3.2.2:** Perform a survey of housing units in Albany and publish a list of all units that meet disabled access requirements. Dissemination of this information to the community will be coordinated through the Housing Opportunities Public Information Campaign as noted in Program 2.1.5.

**Policy HE 3.3:** *Review the Zoning Ordinance so that emergency and transitional housing is permitted within the multi-family and commercial districts as an explicit use.*

**Program HE 3.3:** Revise the Zoning Ordinance so that emergency and transitional housing is permitted within the multi-family and commercial districts. If required, develop specific criteria and standards for such uses.

**Goal HE 4:** **Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of age, race, marital status, ancestry, family status (presence of children), disability, national origin, or color.**

#### **Policies and Programs:**

**Program HE 4.1:** Continue to participate in Operation Sentinel through the Alameda County Department of Housing and Community Development. Publicize these services in the quarterly Albany Newsette and on leaflets at City Hall, the Albany Library, the Albany Senior Center and other important social centers in the City.

**Policy HE 4.2:** *Continue to support landlord-tenant dispute resolution and housing counseling services provided by organizations such as Operation Sentinel.*

**Program 4.2:** Same as public information program under Program 4.1.



## **CONSERVATION, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

**Goal CROS 1: Enhance the natural features of the City's creeks and increase public access to them.**

### **Policies:**

CROS 1.1. Develop a comprehensive program to sponsor restoration and public access improvements for Albany's creeks. Continue to implement the 1977 Albany Creek Restoration Program. As part of this effort, continue to recognize that these areas have important wildlife and vegetation values.

CROS 1.2. Pursue funding for the restoration of Codornices and Cerrito Creeks through the Department of Water Resources Urban Stream Restoration Program, and the Coastal Conservancy.

CROS 1.3. Support the efforts of the Codornices Creek Association to restore Codornices Creek.

CROS 1.4. Develop policies to be included in the Watercourse Combining District to protect riparian habitat within the Creek Conservation Zone where practically feasible and applicable.

**GOAL CROS 2: Increase street tree planting throughout Albany to beautify the City and to help purify the air.**

### **Policy:**

CROS 2.1. Develop and implement a comprehensive street tree planting program for City residential and commercial streets, including establishing priorities, setting time schedules, and developing a comprehensive maintenance program.

**Goal CROS 3: Preserve the crest of Albany Hill for public open space use.**

### **Policies:**

CROS 3.1. Designate the crest of Albany Hill for open space and require dedication of this area for public use through the City's subdivision ordinance requirements (see Land Use Element Policies).

CROS 3.2 Consider the potential impacts to the Monarch Butterfly roosting sites on Albany Hill within the context of developing Albany Hill Park and reviewing residential development applications on the remaining parcels.

**Goal CROS 4: Strive to maintain and improve the quality of Albany's natural environment and cultural resources, and natural resources in general.**

### **Policies:**

CROS 4.1. Coordinate with CalTrans and MTC to monitor air quality impacts of improvements to Interstates 80 and 580 to assure that Albany's air quality will not be allowed to deteriorate any further.

CROS 4.2. Publicize the adverse water quality impacts of dumping residential toxics into domestic waste systems.

CROS 4.3. Promote preservation of trees and other vegetation by requiring an inventory of significant site vegetation prior to development application review.

CROS 4.4. Continue to cooperate in local, sub-regional and regional efforts to implement the Clean Air Plan and meet State Air Quality Standards.

CROS 4.5. Require tree preservation measures during site design and construction.

CROS 4.6. Develop a comprehensive water conservation policy for City facilities and new development, including requirements for drought-resistant landscaping, water-conserving fixtures, and continue to support EBMUD public information campaigns to reduce water consumption.

**Goal CROS 5: Continue to value the importance of the Albany Waterfront area and shoreline as a place of scenic beauty.**

**Policies:**

CROS 5.1. Consider the scenic and visual importance of the waterfront area in any future private and public development.

CROS 5.2. Further preserve the scenic value of the Albany shoreline by prohibiting construction of any building or structure within a 100 foot minimum of the shoreline.

CROS 5.3. Recognize the value of the Hoffman Marsh, located north and west of the Buchanan Street/I-80/I-580 interchange, and protect bird feeding and nesting areas by limiting activities and preserving important habitat areas.

**Goal CROS 6: Develop the maximum feasible park and open space areas in Albany.**

**Policies:**

CROS 6.1. Update the 1974 Park and Recreation Master Plan for the City and establish specific goals, projects, funding sources and time schedules. This work should include detailed improvement and maintenance plans for the City's parks, and be coordinated with the Five Year Capital Improvement Projects Program.

CROS 6.2. Work in conjunction with all existing and potential recreational land-holding parties to promote joint planning, acquisition, development, and joint use and maintenance of park sites and recreational facilities, including childcare, community facilities and athletic fields.

Specifically, encourage and support joint planning efforts for the University of California lands (University Village). Consideration should be given to moving the existing athletic fields and relocating other Village community facilities in order to achieve maximum coordination and benefits for both the Village residents and the City.

CROS 6.3. Develop a plan for bikeways for Albany, linking existing bike paths in Berkeley and El Cerrito. Implement this plan as part of the City's overall road maintenance and traffic signs program within the annual capital projects budget, as well as through specific transportation funding (refer to Circulation Element.)

CROS 6.4 Increase non-automobile public access routes throughout the City by connecting major pathway systems such as the BART linear park to other City, regional and State Parks.

CROS 6.5 Continue to work with Alameda County on improving the operation and management of the Veterans' Memorial Building and increasing community access to the facility.

**Goal CROS 7: Achieve a complimentary mix of private and public uses at the Albany Waterfront which provide for maximum feasible open space, recreation and public access to the waterfront area.**

**Policies:**

CROS 7.1. Implement the Bay Trail Plan along the Albany shoreline. Work with the landowner, the track operator, appropriate citizen and environmental groups, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, Caltrans, the East Bay Regional Park District, the Coastal Conservancy and ABAG to achieve this goal.

CROS 7.2 Consider the important, surrounding wildlife and vegetation resources that must be adequately protected when developing the alignment of the Bay Trail.

CROS 7.3 Require that public access to the shoreline and to Albany Point be a part of any future waterfront development plans, and that future automobile, pedestrian and bicycle access be consistent with and coordinated with future State and regional park and open space plans at the Waterfront.

CROS 7.4 Continue to work with the State Department of Parks and Recreation, the cities of Emeryville and Berkeley, and other State, regional, and local agencies to develop the former Albany landfill site into a State Waterfront Park and to develop the first phase of the Eastshore State Park.

CROS 7.5. Work closely with the EBRPD, the cities of Berkeley, Emeryville, Richmond and Oakland, and other State, regional and local groups to complete the acquisition, planning and development of the Eastshore State Park.

CROS 7.6 Assure that the planning for the East Shore State Park is consistent with the City's

conceptual plan for the Albany portion of the East Shore State Park.

**Goal CROS 8: Increase the City's range of child care programs and expand child care opportunities throughout the City during the planning period by committing adequate resources and funding for facilities and programs.**

**Policies:**

CROS 8.1. Continue working with the Albany Unified School District, the YMCA, U.C. Berkeley and other providers to develop and coordinate child care programs.

CROS 8.2. Strengthen and expand child care programs throughout the City for all age groups through increasing awareness and information about types of programs, improving physical facilities and access for all income groups and long-range planning for future needs.

**Goal CROS 9: Continue to enhance the City's programs for senior citizens.**

**Policies:**

CROS 9.1. Take advantage of all available funding sources in maintaining and improving the programs at the Senior Center.

CROS 9.2. Continue working with the Albany senior citizen organizations to increase participation and access to Albany's senior citizen programs.



**Goal CROS 10: Provide for public arts projects within the City of Albany.**

**Policies:**

CROS 10.1. Consider establishing a fund for public arts projects from a variety of sources including grant monies.

CROS 10.2. Develop guidelines and criteria for purchase or commission of public arts projects.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY ELEMENT**

**Goal CHS 1: Minimize the impact of flooding, seismic, and geologic hazards on the citizens of Albany and their property.**

**Policies:**

CHS 1.1. Conserve riparian and littoral habitat within the area 100 feet from creek centerline in appropriate areas both for its importance in reducing flood impacts and for its aesthetic value.

CHS 1.2. Review and revise City Codes and regulations to ensure that future construction of critical facilities (schools, police stations, fire stations, etc.) in Albany will be able to resist the effects of an earthquake of M 7.5 on the Hayward Fault and sustain only minor structural damage, remain operative, safe, and quickly able to be restored to service.

CHS 1.3. Develop a seismic safety structural inventory and assessment program which reviews the structural integrity of all existing critical facilities and identifies what reconstruction would be necessary to meet a seismic safety standard. After this survey is

completed, the City should evaluate the safest places to locate critical services and facilities.

CHS 1.4. Require that a geologic investigation be conducted on new construction of critical facilities in areas identified on the Environmental Hazards Map as having Medium-High to High susceptibility to ground failure during an earthquake.

CHS 1.5. Develop an unreinforced masonry building program for commercial areas and multi-family residences. This program should be phased with the initial efforts aimed at determining the extent of risk to each identified building. In later phases, the City should focus efforts on strengthening or abating the most hazardous buildings and those with the highest occupancy loads. The program should also include various financing options and programs to aid private property owners in meeting the requirements.

CHS 1.6. Require review of the Environmental Hazards Map at the time a development is proposed. Assure implementation of appropriate mitigation measures if hazards are identified.

**Goal CHS 2: Strengthen and update City programs and procedures for emergency preparedness.**

**Policies:**

CHS 2.1. Continue to develop a City-wide disaster preparedness program to organize and train residents and area employees so that they can assist themselves and others during the first 72 hours following an earthquake or other major disaster. This program should also include improved emergency procedures and assistance for businesses with disaster preparedness efforts.

CHS 2.2. Update and revise the Multihazard Functional Plan as appropriate, as part of the

City-wide earthquake preparedness program. As part of this effort, review the data and information available from other cities that responded to the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. In particular, the plan should include community and business resources that could be gathered to help with emergency response efforts (equipment, food, medical care, etc.)

CHS 2.3. Develop the program, equipment and procedures for an emergency operations center at the new Library/Community Center on Marin Avenue.

CHS 2.4. Maintain present level of fire protection service throughout Albany.

CHS 2.5. Ensure that police service to all areas of Albany maintains its present level of service.

**Goal CHS 3: Reduce the exposure of present and future Albany residents and workers to hazardous materials.**

**Policies:**

CHS 3.1. Evaluate and map the presence of hazardous materials at any development or redevelopment sites filled prior to 1974, or sites historically devoted to uses which may have involved hazardous wastes.

CHS 3.2. Continue to participate and cooperate with the Alameda County Hazardous Waste Management Authority and the County Department of Environmental Health in their efforts to require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials.

CHS 3.3. The City should support State and Federal legislation to strengthen safety requirements for the transportation of hazardous materials.

**Goal CHS 4: Prevent exposure of Albany citizens to unacceptable noise levels and alleviate noise exposure problems where feasible.**

**Policies:**

CHS 4.1. Require preparation of an acoustical report for any project which would be exposed to noise levels in excess of those shown as "normally acceptable" in Figure 3 and Table 1 and as generally identified on the Noise Contours Map.

CHS 4.2. Require mitigation measures for new residential, transient lodging, motel/hotel, school, library, church and hospital development to reduce noise exposure to "normally acceptable" levels.

CHS 4.3. Require post-construction monitoring and sign-off by an acoustical engineer to ensure that City guidelines have been achieved whenever mitigation measures to achieve conformance with the criteria in Figure 3 and Table 1 are imposed.

CHS 4.4. Require mitigation measures be incorporated into and an acoustical report be prepared for projects that would cause the following criteria to be exceeded or would have the potential for creating significant community annoyance:

- A. cause the Ldn in existing residential areas to exceed an Ldn of 60 dB minimum;
- B. cause the Ldn in existing residential areas to increase by 3 dB or more if the Ldn currently exceeds 60 dB; or
- C. generate noise levels that would be expected to create significant adverse community response.

CHS 4.5. Work with Caltrans to evaluate and develop information on opportunities for improved noise insulation that could be given to residents wishing to reduce the noise levels at their homes.

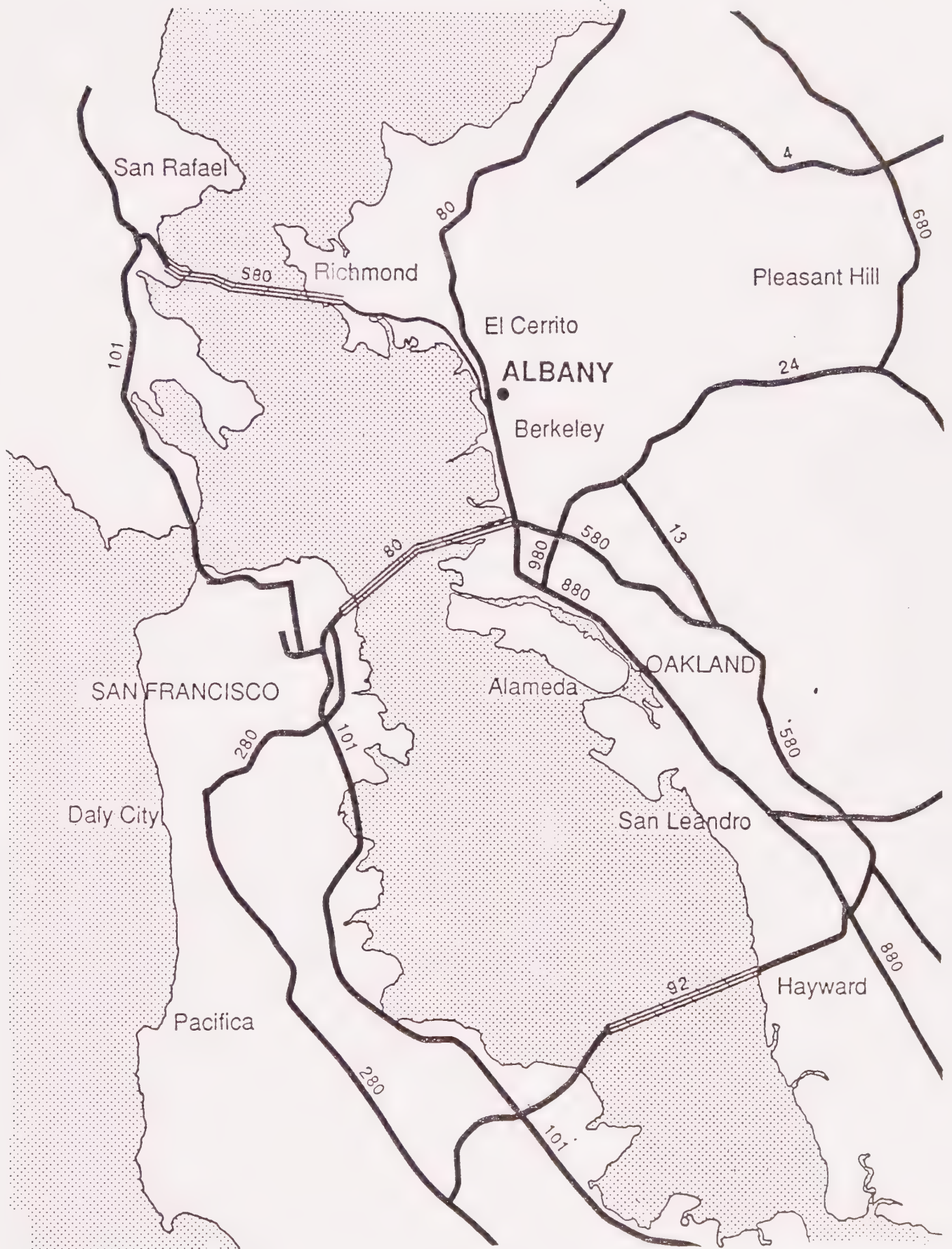
**Goal CHS 5: Reduce the impact of BART noise.**

**Policies:**

CHS 5.1. Develop a program to measure noise impacts along the BART corridor and to reduce identified noise problems.

CHS 5.2. Work with BART to install noise insulation improvements along the BART tracks in Albany as part of their overall capital improvement program during 1995-2000.





City of Albany  
REGIONAL MAP











# LAND USE ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Albany is a mature residential community. Small bungalows, built closely together, line the streets of this urban community. In 1991, approximately 16,400 people lived in Albany.

Two distinctive commercial areas along San Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue serve resident's needs for goods and services. San Pablo Avenue has a regional character, with low-scale, expansive land uses such as strip shopping centers and auto dealerships. Solano Avenue is a pedestrian-oriented commercial district where grocers, florists, restaurants, and other retailers can be found. Professional offices, public services and apartment complexes add to a successful mix of land uses along Solano Avenue.

Albany's industrial land is well situated along Interstate 80. Light manufacturing, warehousing and other industrial land uses are accommodated adjacent to this major transportation route and away from residential neighborhoods.

The Albany Waterfront is home to Golden Gate Fields racetrack, a popular regional recreation site. The racetrack is expected to remain in operation at least through 2002.

The City of Albany contains seven parks. In addition there are future open space and park opportunities at the Waterfront. Open space in the City of Albany is identified in the Land Use Element, and discussed in detail in the Conservation, Recreation & Open Space Element.

The high level of community services are an important feature of Albany. This Plan

recognizes the priority that Albany's citizens place on maintaining high standards for schools, police, fire, recreational and other public services.

Community Design is a subject of concern to Albany's residents, particularly as the intensity of residential development increases and as the desire to enhance the aesthetics of Albany's commercial districts grows.

Each of the land use types and range of public services described above are discussed in this Element of the Plan. Future trends, development opportunities and ways to improve community services are analyzed. The policies concerning land use types and intensities have been represented on the Land Use Plan Map. This Map will serve as a guide for future land use decisions by the City.

## RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The City of Albany is predominately a residential community. Small, 2,500 to 5,000 square foot lots have yielded high residential densities. The 1990 U.S. Census indicated that there were a total of 7,468 dwelling units in Albany, including 3,957 single-family units, 778 housing units in 2-4 unit complexes, and 2,659 units in complexes of 5 or more units. The Census also indicated Albany contained 74 mobilehomes. The City is not aware of any mobilehomes in Albany and understands from the Census Data Center that residents may have mistakenly selected the "mobilehome and other" category on their census form due to a lack of understanding about the various housing categories.

Albany's high residential densities reflect historical development patterns. In the early 1900s development in Albany (then known as Ocean View) consisted of small single-family homes, typically built by the family who occupied them, on narrow 25- to 37-foot-wide

lots. As the community grew, it maintained this dense, primarily single-family residential character. Subsequent zoning regulations permitted higher densities in the area bordered by San Pablo Avenue to the west and the BART tracks to the east that resulted in a hop-scotch development pattern of multiple units adjacent to single-family homes. A 1978 voter-initiated revision of the Zoning Ordinance reestablished a single-family residential district in this area.

The historically higher residential densities also reflect parking requirements which have changed substantially over the years. Prior to 1959, no on-site parking was required for residential development. This allowed a greater number of units to be placed on a given lot. In 1959, one space per unit was required. In 1978, this requirement increased to two spaces per unit, as a result of the voter-initiated ballot Measure D.

The 1978 amendments to the Zoning Ordinance came as a result of a community concern that high permitted densities in some neighborhoods were eroding neighborhood character by increasing on-street parking and creating large buildings that were out of keeping with the one-story, small-scale residences typical of most areas.

Future development opportunities in Albany are limited by the small amount of vacant land. Of the total vacant land in Albany, only 2% (22.5 acres) is in residential areas. Most of this land (21 acres) is on Albany Hill. Therefore, redevelopment of existing underdeveloped areas offers the greatest opportunities for future growth. The areas identified for possible redevelopment with residential or mixed use development include eight blocks within the area zoned Commercial Expansion (C-E) on Kains Avenue and Adams Street, part of the Albany Bowl site on San Pablo Avenue, the Hill Lumber site on Brighton just east of BART, and portions of the University of California lands adjacent to Albany Village.

The Land Use Element policies and Map define a future for Albany which draws upon the strengths of its past. The Plan is sensitive to concerns of existing residents such as density, traffic, parking, views, and good design. At the same time, the Plan permits moderate growth in appropriate areas to accommodate future residents.

### **Low Density, Single-Family Housing**

The Plan reserves a total of 306 acres for single-family residential development at densities from 1 to 17 dwelling units per acre. When the City becomes completely built-out, there will be approximately 3,670 single-family dwelling units, assuming an average density of 12 units/acre.

In fact, single-family units exist in areas designated for higher density residential uses and may well continue to do so. Therefore, the actual future total number of single-family dwelling units in Albany will exceed the build-out estimate under the Plan with a consequent reduction in the projected number of medium and high density housing units.

In addition, there are 11 parcels on Albany Hill of a size greater-than, or equal-to, 4,000 square feet. These 11 parcels, distributed over 2 acres of land, are expected to yield 11 dwelling units. The City's R-1 and R-1-H Zoning Districts are compatible with this land use.

### **Medium Density, Multi-Family Housing**

Medium density, multi-family residential development includes duplexes, and three-to-six unit apartment buildings. The number of dwelling units allowed on each parcel is determined by the Zoning Ordinance which takes into account, parcel size, minimum lot area permitted per unit, a two-car-per-dwelling unit parking requirement, a three-story height limit, and a 50% building coverage limit.



The medium density category ranges from seventeen to thirty-four dwelling units per acre, with an average of 27 dwelling units per acre. This average density was derived from an analysis of the percentage of parcels in 2,500, 3,750, 5,000 and 7,500 square foot representative lot sizes, the number of acres of land assigned to this density range, and the number of units possible on each of the representative parcels based on current zoning policy requirements.

The Plan reserves approximately 39 acres for medium density residential use. This density category includes existing R-2 Zoning District land. The future housing potential given an average density of 27 units per acre is 1,048 dwelling units.

In addition, approximately 6 acres of land on portions of lower Albany Hill already developed with an average density of 15 units per acre would yield 90 units under the Plan. Thus, a total of 1,138 multi-family units are expected at buildout under this medium density category.

### **High Density, Multi-Family Housing**

High density multi-family residential development exists on the northwest portion of Albany Hill where there are 802 condominium dwelling units built on 14 acres.

High density housing is also planned adjacent to the Buchanan Street interchange, for eight blocks within the previously defined Commercial Expansion Zone, along Kains and Adams Streets, and in the northern sector of the City along Brighton Avenue. The Plan reserves just over 38 acres in these areas with a density range of seventeen to sixty-three dwelling units per net acre. An average density of 39 units per acre was derived using the analysis described above for medium density housing. There will be an estimated 1,489 high density dwelling units in these areas of Albany at General Plan

buildout. This density category is consistent with the R-3, and R-4 Zoning Districts.

The Plan identifies additional areas which present opportunities for future high density residential development such as the former Hill Lumber parcel, located on Brighton Ave. The site is approximately 4 acres in area. Based on an average density of 39 units per acre, the potential exists for approximately 156 multi-family units on this site.

Preservation of the existing densities of certain multi-family properties should they be severely damaged or destroyed is an important policy consideration given the need to conserve affordable housing. This could be achieved through a Conditional Use Permit procedure. In this way, a property owner could maintain the existing building density, even if non-conforming, with special findings and conditions being met. Such a procedure would help to maintain affordable rental housing with few, if any impacts on surrounding properties.

### **Planned Residential Commercial**

The Plan provides a new land use designation called Planned Residential Commercial (PRC) which is intended to encourage redevelopment of existing commercial uses on San Pablo Avenue into mixed use developments typically comprised of street-level retail with high density residential uses on rear street frontages and second floors. These areas are seen as suitable for high density housing given the proximity to services and transit. In addition, areas designated Planned Residential Commercial will provide a transition from commercial uses on San Pablo Avenue to medium density residential uses on adjacent streets.

The PRC designation for the Albany Bowl property and the Villa Motel site on San Pablo Avenue presents two mixed use redevelopment opportunities. Approximately 3 acres are available for development. If a portion of the

Albany Bowl site located along Adams was developed at high density, up to 58 units could be gained. The remainder of the Albany Bowl site, located along San Pablo Avenue, would yield 69,100 square feet of commercial space (at a planned commercial intensity of 0.95 FAR).

The Villa Motel on San Pablo Avenue is another site suited to mixed use redevelopment. This parcel straddles the border between Albany and Berkeley with approximately 1.2 acres in Albany. Assuming half this area is developed for high density housing and half for commercial use, as many as 22 multi-family units and 24,000 square feet of commercial space could be realized.

The Town Centre development is presently a mixed use housing and commercial project on San Pablo Avenue and Adams Street. The site contains 16,130 sq. ft. of commercial space with three apartment units on the second floor. These units share parking with commercial tenants. Along Adams Street, the project includes 2 single-family units and two duplexes. A total of nine dwelling units are associated with the Towne Centre.

The total future number of high density residential units expected under the Plan is 1,857 units.

### **Albany Hill Planned Residential Development**

A Planned Development district has been assigned to Albany Hill in order to allow for creative residential design which responds to the natural land form and the desire to retain as much open space as possible along the ridgeline. In April, 1994, Albany voters approved a revision to the Hillside Zoning District requirements and standards, as well as a review of the Albany Hill Specific Plan. The purpose of this action, which was set in motion as part of an interim urgency ordinance to pause development on portions of Albany Hill, was to

revise development requirements to fit better with the environmental constraints and visual importance of the Albany Hill area. Residential density was reduced from 12-18 dwelling units per acre to 6-9 dwelling units per acre. Approximately 19 acres of land are affected by this redesignation. The maximum development potential in this area is 171 units.

### **Second Units**

During 1989-90, the City completed a second unit legalization and abatement program. This highly successful program resulted in 103 legalized and upgraded second units. Zoning regulations have also been changed to better accommodate this type of housing within the average lot size and house size in Albany. Between 1988 and 1991, six new second units were approved by the City, an average of 1.5 units per year. It is expected that another 50 units will be approved within the 20-year planning period.

### **Residential in Commercial Districts**

A field survey found 248 multi-family residential units in the City's commercial districts in 1989. These residences can be reasonably assumed to provide less costly housing needed to serve a diverse population. This residential population also serves to keep these commercial streets active and safe at night. Residential policies provide that the number of multi-family residential units in commercial areas will increase by approximately 10% during the plan period.

The Plan also assumes that the 21 existing single-family residences in commercial areas will be converted to commercial uses with high density residential units above. The total number of residential units in commercial areas is estimated to increase to 341 during the Plan period.

## Population Density

Population density at buildout of the Land Use Plan in Albany will be 17,020 assuming 2.17 persons per household (based on ABAG's Projections '90 for the year 2005 and assuming a comparable vacancy rate as in 1994, 3.6%). Upon Plan buildout, there will be approximately 8,135 housing units, including 920 University of California student housing units.

This population and housing unit forecast is a projection of the average building densities shown on the Land Use Plan Map. It is understood that actual development densities vary from the average density and that planned land use changes are dependent upon private market forces which may not correspond to the planning period.

Land use changes from the previous General Plan generally reflect a closer relationship between actual land uses and densities and land use designations in the Plan. These changes include a reduction in density in the Albany Hill Planned Development area which recognizes the slope and traffic constraints of development on the Hill; addition of the Planned Residential Commercial sites on San Pablo Avenue which would permit high density housing in depressed or underutilized commercial areas; and increased areas for high density housing, such as the Hill Lumber site.

## RESIDENTIAL LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal LU 1: Preserve and enhance the residential character of Albany.**

### Policies:

LU 1.1. Maintain existing residential densities throughout Albany. Consider reducing the permitted residential densities on Albany Hill in response to concerns about the steep topography, related soils and drainage problems, parking and street capacity, and protection of view corridors. (This required voter approval to amend the 12-18 units/acre density range established by Measure D in 1978.)

LU 1.2. Establish Zoning standards for areas designated Planned Residential Commercial (PRC) to support redevelopment of underutilized commercial areas for mixed use particularly along San Pablo Avenue.

LU 1.3. Encourage development of secondary dwelling units, balancing the need for increased housing with the need to provide adequate parking, and protection of existing neighborhood character.

## COMMERCIAL LAND USE

There are two major commercial districts in Albany, each with very different characters and functions.

### San Pablo Avenue General Commercial

San Pablo Avenue for many years served as a major north-south route (California State Highway Route 123), thus encouraging the regional serving land uses which have developed along this road. The road consists of six travel lanes of which two also serve as parking lanes. The street is developed with a



variety of low-scale, automobile-oriented retail facilities that present a generally unattractive but functional appearance for most of its length through the City. San Pablo Avenue provides the gateways to Albany from El Cerrito, Berkeley, and Interstate 80, and is the location for City Hall and the University of California's Albany Village complex. The Plan seeks to improve the visual appearance and vitality of San Pablo Avenue's commercial environment.

There are approximately 779,000 square feet of commercial land area along the frontage of San Pablo Avenue in Albany, and 229,500 square feet of commercial land use in the Commercial Expansion (C-E) Zone which abuts this frontage. The average Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 0.80, thus yielding an estimated 806,700 square feet of commercial building space along and adjacent to San Pablo Avenue.

Current commercial zoning standards restrict building height on San Pablo Avenue to 45 feet. Permitted site coverage is 100%, however the maximum utilization of a building site is further restricted by off-street parking requirements. Parking requirements average one space for every 400 square feet of building square footage.

Exceptions to this parking requirement may be granted by the Planning & Zoning Commission. However, in order to account for present and future parking needs in a more consistent manner, the Plan recommends that one acre of land be set aside for the development of municipal parking to serve San Pablo businesses. This parking site area is considered in the planned commercial development potential described below. Given the unsuccessful 1990 referendum on parking meters, it is recognized that this approach to funding or providing parking currently is, and may continue to be, unacceptable.

The San Pablo Avenue commercial district, at an average FAR of 0.80, is currently

underdeveloped. Increasing the intensity of commercial development, attracting non-automotive retail uses, and making other improvements to the visual character of San Pablo Avenue will serve to enliven commercial activity. San Pablo Avenue can support a more intensive FAR of 0.95 given present circulation facilities. In addition, four blocks within the Commercial Expansion Zone, which are in predominately commercial use, are assigned this land use designation under the Plan. The Plan recommends rezoning the Commercial Expansion Zone to General Commercial or High Density Residential use depending upon the current predominate land use pattern. Within the existing boundaries of the C-E Zone, the Plan provides a mixed use (PRC: high density residential and commercial) designation for the Albany Bowl, Town Centre and Villa Motel sites. These changes in land use will allow an increase in San Pablo Avenue commercial square footage to 910,000 square feet.

In 1990, the City completed a Design Guideline and Public Improvement Study for San Pablo Avenue. In 1991, the City Council directed that the study be used as the basis to develop design guidelines for the San Pablo Avenue Corridor, which in turn will be incorporated by reference into the Zoning requirements for the General Commercial District.

### **Solano Avenue Community Commercial**

Solano Avenue serves as "Main Street" for Albany. It has a useful and pleasing variety of local-serving retail, service, and office uses, interspersed with an occasional apartment house complex. The Post Office is also located on this tree-lined, pedestrian-oriented street. The Albany Theatre is an important focal point for commercial activity along lower Solano Avenue. It has been a movie theatre for over 40 years as well as an important physical landmark.

There is approximately 542,300 square feet of land area in commercial/office uses along

Solano Avenue. A field survey estimated the present commercial FAR at 1.10. This FAR yields approximately 597,000 square feet of commercial development in this district. In addition, approximately 2 acres of single-family residential use along Solano Avenue is expected to convert to mixed commercial/residential development in the Plan.

Present zoning requirements set a maximum permitted building height of 35 feet. Permitted building coverage is 100%, however this is severely limited by the City's parking requirements. The parking requirements and exceptions are the same for the Solano Avenue shopping district as they are for the San Pablo Avenue commercial area. The Plan recommends that up to one acre of land be reserved to create municipal parking for Solano Avenue shoppers should parcels become available.

The Solano Avenue shopping district could support a modest increase in building intensity to a 1.25 FAR given present circulation facilities. Buildout under this intensity standard would yield 719,000 commercial square feet.

## COMMERCIAL LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal LU 2: Encourage and upgrade commercial development along San Pablo Avenue in order to expand the City's economic base.**

### Policies:

LU 2.1. Evaluate the economic importance of existing auto-oriented uses and their need for larger sites with better freeway access than can be found on San Pablo Avenue.

LU 2.2. Establish design guidelines for commercial facades, landscaping, and public

improvements along the San Pablo Avenue corridor, based upon the San Pablo Avenue Design Guideline Study.

LU 2.3. Consider various public improvements for San Pablo Avenue, as outlined in the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Design Guideline and Public Improvement Study. Incorporate a program for these improvements into the 1995-2000 City Capital Improvement Program.

LU 2.4. Consider and establish a funding mechanism in order to develop municipal parking facilities to meet increased parking demand.

LU 2.5. Permit a moderate increase in new commercial development intensity to a maximum FAR of 0.95. This intensity may be exceeded when a comprehensive traffic study prepared for a specific project proposal indicates that additional capacity can be created along San Pablo Avenue to accommodate additional traffic.

**Goal LU 3: Restrict conversion of residential uses to commercial uses along specific blocks of Kains and Adams Streets where residential uses predominate and permit such conversions where commercial uses predominate.**

### Policies:

LU 3.1. Establish a commercial land use designation and revise the C-E Zoning District to allow commercial uses on blocks which are now predominately in commercial use. Designate and rezone those blocks for residential use which are now predominately residential.

LU 3.2. Strengthen design standards for those blocks of Kains and Adams designated for commercial use, including requirements for



landscaping, minimum setbacks, fences, and screening of storage areas and mechanical equipment.

LU 3.3. Discourage or prevent the use of Kains and Adams for primary access to non-residential uses.

LU 3.4. Consider more stringent regulation of parking on portions of Kains and Adams Streets and adjacent residential streets, including timed parking or parking permits.

**Goal LU 4: Maintain and promote a mix of commercial uses on Solano Avenue that serves the community.**

**Policies:**

LU 4.1. Permit a moderate increase in new commercial development intensity to a maximum FAR of 1.25. This intensity may be exceeded when a comprehensive traffic study indicates that it is feasible to create additional capacity along Solano Avenue to accommodate increased traffic.

LU 4.2. Maintain and strengthen the existing pedestrian character of Solano Avenue, particularly by encouraging retail and service uses on the ground floor level of buildings and limiting office uses except for the upper levels.

LU 4.3. Establish stronger design criteria that consider appropriate building scale, architecture and orientation to the street.

LU 4.4. Consider and establish a funding mechanism for developing municipal parking facilities to meet increased parking demand.

LU 4.5. Actively encourage the appropriate future use of the School District-owned library site on Solano Avenue, giving consideration to its impact upon the commercial and pedestrian environment of Solano Avenue.

LU 4.6. Enhance and develop public spaces along the Avenue, including the area in front of the existing Albany Library. Consider replacing the existing Kiosk with a better designed and maintained structure for posting notices and providing public information.

**Goal LU 5: Protect residential neighborhoods from the adverse impacts of adjacent commercial uses through the creation of a transition area along Solano Avenue cross streets.**

**Policies:**

LU 5.1. Evaluate the existing commercial uses along Solano and their relationship to the adjacent residential zone on a block-by-block basis. Establish a transition zone where appropriate and consider regulating such factors as hours of operation, types of use, traffic and parking demand.

LU 5.2. Develop use, design, and noise standards and requirements for this transition area.

## **LIGHT INDUSTRIAL LAND USE**

There are approximately 45.4 acres zoned for Commercial - Service - Light Industrial use along Interstate 80 and 580. This Zoning District, established in 1989, permits a variety of uses including retail, repair, manufacturing, and live/work studios.

The Plan has assigned a building intensity standard of 0.50 FAR for this land area.

The 17-acres of Santa Fe Railroad lines that run north and south alongside the industrial sector, and the existing 11.5 acres of vacant industrial land in this vicinity, present opportunities for new development. The development of this



land and the redevelopment of improved property at an FAR of 0.50 will yield approximately 990,000 square feet of building square footage in the area.

## **LIGHT INDUSTRIAL LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Goal LU 6: Increase the economic vitality of the City's industrial use areas.**

### **Policy:**

LU 6.1. Identify appropriate locations for automobile retail and service uses in the areas zoned for Commercial/Service/Light Industrial uses. Develop appropriate informational materials to encourage San Pablo Avenue auto dealerships and auto-related businesses to consider these locations.

## **PUBLIC LAND USE**

### **Public / Quasi Public Land Use**

The Land Use Plan identifies City of Albany lands, schools, churches, and public utilities. The Plan recommends an FAR of 0.95 as a maximum building intensity for public lands. This section discusses the two large tracts in public ownership: the University of California lands and the US Department of Agriculture facility. A detailed discussion of the City of Albany's Community Services and Facilities can be found after the discussion of Open Space in this Element.

### **University of California Land**

The University of California provides married student family housing at University Village in the City of Albany. University Village land uses presently include multi-family housing,

park and open space, a community center, and the Natural Resources Research fields and laboratories.

The University has initiated a planning process for the redevelopment of this 73-acre property. U.C. officials have indicated that they are going to replace the existing 920 housing units in phases, given current financial constraints.

The U.C. master planning process presents a significant opportunity to better integrate this large, isolated tract with the rest of Albany. Accordingly, a series of goals and policies have been included in the General Plan that set forth the City's expectations.

In addition, land use categories which reflect the goals of the City of Albany, and the intentions of the University have been designated in the Land Use Plan. These three land use designations are:

- 1) Residential, Recreation (RR): Medium residential densities, at a maximum of 34 units per acre are allowed. Recreational facilities including park and open space, community centers, and sports fields are allowed under this land use designation. A maximum FAR of 0.95 for recreational buildings has been assigned.
- 2) Residential, Recreation, Commercial (RRC): Medium residential densities at a maximum of 34 units per acre are allowed. Recreation facilities including park and open space, community centers, and sports fields are allowed. A maximum FAR of 0.95 for recreational buildings, retail and office development has been assigned for this land use designation.
- 3) Residential, Commercial (RC): Medium residential densities at a maximum of 34 units per acre is allowed. Retail and office commercial development at a maximum FAR of 0.95 is allowed.

Approximately 47 acres of the UC lands are devoted to the 920 student housing units. The Plan assumes continuation of this density during the 20-year plan period.

### **The United States Department of Agriculture Facility**

The United States Department of Agriculture has 300,000 square feet of research facilities on 12 acres of land just east of the Buchanan Street/I-80 interchange. The USDA facilities include two separate research departments aimed at reducing losses in, and improving the market quality of agricultural produce. These departments comprise the Western Regional Research Center, employing 250 scientists and support staff, and the Plant Gene Expression Center, employing 102 individuals. The Plant Gene Expression Center conducts genetic engineering in compliance with National Institute for Health recombinant DNA research guidelines. The Administrative Director of Agricultural Research for the Pacific - West Area also works from this site.

The USDA Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experimentation Station is expected to move to this location from Berkeley, bringing 100 employees. Following this addition to the site, no change in land use is planned through the year 2010.

## **PUBLIC LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Goal LU 7:      Ensure      that      future redevelopment      of      the University of California lands is compatible with the City's long-term land use, public services, and public facilities goals.**

### **Policies:**

LU 7.1.      Designate the UC lands along the San Pablo Avenue frontage and a portion of Buchanan Street at the intersection of San Pablo for commercial retail and compatible uses. Incorporate the recommendations in the San Pablo Avenue Design Guideline and Public Improvement Study as part of this effort. In addition, consider preserving a portion of the Gill Tract, particularly those portions with important and significant stands of trees, as open space when any re-use of this area is proposed.

LU 7.2.      Participate actively in the UC Master Plan process for redevelopment of the Gill Tract and Albany Village. Specific concerns that must be addressed in this process include, but are not limited to:

- A. Coordinate planning efforts for the City's, University's, and Albany School District's park, recreation, and open space lands to improve public access, improve parking capacity, increase use, and improve overall traffic safety in the area for students, pedestrians, and automobiles.
- B. Protect and enhance the creeks running through and adjacent to the U.C. Village property.
- C. Protect and preserve the important stands of trees on the site.

- D. Specify and reach new agreements with the University for financial and/or in-kind support of City infrastructure, services, and capital facilities that are used by U.C. Village, including, but not limited to, sanitary and storm sewers, public safety services, public streets, and parks and open spaces.
- E. Focus on redeveloping the housing units at U.C. Village to meet the current and future needs of its residents for a family-oriented project with adequate community and recreational facilities that are better integrated with the City.
- F. Evaluate the overall parking capacity within the Village vs. the existing and future patterns of usage, and the use of on-street parking spaces outside the Village that are used by University students.

## OPEN SPACE

The City of Albany is primarily an urban environment, thus open space in the City consists largely of park lands. A more detailed discussion of these lands takes place in the Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Element. The following sections briefly describe the type, location, and area of open space lands in the City.

### Public Open Space

There are approximately 31 acres of existing park land in the City of Albany. This park land is distributed among seven City parks ranging in size from 0.10 to 7.5 acres, primarily located adjacent to schools and on Albany Hill. Additional future Waterfront park land is presently planned. This acreage includes the 32-acre Albany Point State Park, and the Albany Bay Shore "linkage," providing continuous shoreline public access along the Albany Waterfront from Buchanan Street to Berkeley.

Buildings are permitted on open space lands with the following intensity and coverage limits: a building intensity as defined by a height limit of 35 feet and a coverage up to 25%. Such facilities are approved on a case-by-case basis through a conditional use permit procedure.

### Private Open Space

Fifteen acres of private land on Albany Hill's northwest slope were set aside as permanent open space when the Gateview, Bridgewater, and Bayside Commons residential developments were approved. This land is contiguous to Albany Hill Park and remains in its natural state. The Plan recommends dedication of the remaining Albany Hill ridgetop area, presently in private ownership, for public use when that area is developed as part of the City's Parkland Dedication requirements.

The University of California also has two significant areas of open space: the 9.5-acre Natural Resources Research land, and the 5.8-acre Dowling Park which serves Albany Village residents. The Natural Resources land is used for agricultural research and thus is not available for active recreation but serves as a visual amenity. Dowling Park has play structures for children, an open lawn area, and land for Village residents' vegetable gardens.

## THE ALBANY WATERFRONT

The Albany Waterfront, roughly 160 acres in area, consists of the 32-acre Albany Landfill site, also known as the "bulb," and the remaining lands owned by Catellus Corporation. Catellus leases the major portion of their land for operation of the Golden Gate Fields Racetrack which was built in the 1930s. The City owns an 80-foot-wide easement across the northern portion of the site and over an area known as "the neck" located near Albany Point.



The Golden Gate Fields Racetrack is under a lease agreement with Catellus through at least December 31, 2001. This commercial recreational use is consistent with the current Waterfront zoning. A 0.50 FAR standard has been assigned to this area.

The Plan also anticipates development of public parks and public access at the Waterfront. These opportunities are further described in the Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Element.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES**

### **Fire**

The City of Albany has one fire station, located at the City Hall complex on San Pablo Avenue, with 23 Fire Department employees. Each shift is staffed with a minimum of six firefighters including full paramedic services. The existing full time staff is considered sufficient to meet current City needs.

The Department's response time of less than three minutes to any location in Albany is well within current standards for acceptable response time. Albany has a mutual aid agreement with Berkeley by which they assist each other in meeting the needs of multiple emergencies.

Albany also has cooperative arrangements with the neighboring communities of El Cerrito, Kensington, Richmond, and Berkeley for responding to fires at or near the City's boundaries. Berkeley has nearby fire stations located at Ninth and Cedar Streets and at Marin and The Alameda.

The Department responds to over 1,200 emergency calls per year, of which over two-thirds are for medical aid. Albany's Fire Department operates an ambulance service and, together with the City of Berkeley, provides

medical emergency response to Albany residents. Both basic and advanced life support services are provided to Albany residents.

Water supply and pressure to fight fires is considered to be adequate. A separate water line comes directly from the Berkeley Hills to Jackson Street to serve the Albany Hill area and water supply and pressure is adequate for fire fighting elsewhere in Albany. The Fire Department will conduct fire inspections of private homes upon request to the Department. Fire hazards are discussed further in the Community Health and Safety Element.

### **Police**

The Albany Police Department provides police protection and traffic enforcement from its headquarters in the City Hall complex. The Department has a staff of 31, of whom 26 are administrative, investigative, and patrol officers.

Due to its small area, Albany is not divided into specific patrols beats; each beat comprises the entire city. Police response time to any point in Albany is generally one minute or less, and never exceeds three minutes, which is considered a very high standard of service. The crime rate in Albany is substantially lower than in other neighboring jurisdictions.

### **Schools**

The Albany Unified School District operates all the public education institutions in Albany: three elementary schools, each serving different neighborhoods; one middle school; one high school; and a continuation high school. There is also a private Catholic High School in Albany. The quality of education in this school district is considered to be high.

Future population growth in Albany has the potential to overcrowd present school facilities, necessitate program changes such as split sessions, or increase taxes to build new schools.

In 1991, the School District completed a School Facilities funding Study which outlined several options to improve and increase school facilities to ensure students are adequately accommodated and the educational purposes are met.

A summary of School District facilities is as follows:

Albany High School: Albany High School serves students in grades 9-12 from throughout the City of Albany.

Albany Middle School: Albany Middle School serves all of Albany for children in grades 6-8.

Elementary Schools: Cornell Elementary School draws its students from the area of the BART tracks west to San Pablo Ave. It serves students in grades K-5.

Marin Elementary School serves grades K-5 and students who live east of the BART tracks to the City limits.

Vista Elementary School serves grades K-2 children who live in the area bounded by San Pablo Avenue, west to the City limits.

MacGregor Elementary School serves grades K-2 children who live in the northeastern area of Albany.

Private Schools: St. Mary's College High School is a private Catholic High School serving East Bay families.

Continuing Education: MacGregor Continuation School serves as an alternative school for high school children and is located adjacent to Cougar Field.

Albany Adult School: The Albany Adult School is located in the High School. Class

enrollments for this program exceed 10,000 per year.

The number of out-of-district students has nearly been eliminated in the past few years at the elementary and middle school level due to increased Albany residents' enrollment.

Increases in elementary school enrollment reflects the changing demographics of Albany, specifically the increase in families with small children. Elementary schools are feeling the most significant pressure for new or expanded facilities to meet this growing demand.

In 1987, School District voters approved a special 4-year household tax. This tax was extended in November, 1990. These funds are to be spent primarily for curriculum improvements, although some money is available for purchase of instructional equipment and facility maintenance.

## **Recreation**

The City of Albany Recreation & Community Services Department oversees the seven City parks, and sponsors a wide range of programs to meet the varying needs of Albany residents. A detailed discussion of these facilities and services is in the Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Element.

## **Library**

The Albany Library, a branch of the Alameda County Library System, houses over 40,000 volumes, 6,000 paperbacks, 130 periodical titles, 2,000 records, 800 video cassettes, 1000 audio cassettes, and 1000 compact disks. The Library has one of the highest per capita circulation rates of any library in California. The average number of library items circulated annually per Albany resident is 14.9, as compared to a figure of eight per capita in Berkeley.



Prior to 1993, the library was housed in a 3,300 square foot building owned and maintained by the City. A new Community Center and Library complex was completed at the former Alta Bates Hospital site in 1994. The new library has a main floor of 12,000 sq. ft., plus a basement storage area.

### **Corporation Yard**

The City's existing corporation yard facilities are inadequate to meet both equipment and personnel space requirements. The City Council is currently pursuing both a site and building plan for an expanded facility.

### **Medical**

For purposes of health facility planning, the Federal Government has divided the State of California into 14 geographic Health Service Areas (HSAs). The City of Albany lies within the Alameda/Contra Costa County HSA. There are 38 hospitals in this HSA, providing a range of services including medical surgery, pediatric, intensive care, coronary care, burn treatment, chemical dependency, and acute psychiatric care. There are no hospitals operating at present in Albany. Acute care is provided at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, or at Highland Hospital in Oakland.

The Alameda/Contra Costa HSA has 52 clinics. There are 38 community clinics, two free clinics, one psychological clinic, one surgical clinic, 9 chronic dialysis clinics, and one rehabilitation clinic.

The Alameda/Contra Costa HSA also includes 122 long-term care facilities. Ninety-eight of these are skilled nursing facilities, eleven are intermediate care, three are skilled nursing facilities for the mentally disordered, and ten provide a mix of services. Two facilities have hospice care programs. Two facilities care for AIDS/ARC patients.

There are 38 home health agencies in the Alameda/Contra Costa HSA. The needs of Alzheimer's patients are addressed by 20 of these agencies. Eighteen agencies care for AIDS/ARC patients.

### **Solid Waste Management and Recycling**

Solid waste is collected in Albany by the Waste Management Company and taken to the Altamont Landfill east of Livermore. The Waste Management Company states that this landfill has sufficient capacity for existing and future developments within the company's service area well beyond the year 2010.

The Waste Management Company, in cooperation with the Alameda County Solid Waste Management Authority and the City of Albany, provides weekly curbside recycling for residents of Albany. Newspapers, bottles, and cans placed in special buckets provided each resident, are picked up on the same day as regular garbage service.

The City of Albany, along with other California cities, is developing a Source Reduction and Recycling Plan and a Hazardous Waste Plan as required by State Law (AB 939). These plans will include short and long range goals and programs to reduce solid waste, promote recycling, and increase public awareness.

### **Water**

Water is supplied to Albany by the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) from reservoirs in the Berkeley Hills. EBMUD places no restrictions on development within their existing service boundary and does not expect any development occurring in Albany to cause water supply problems or affect current EBMUD water treatment plant capacity. Any restrictions on water consumption caused by drought would affect all areas within the EBMUD service boundary equally.



## Sewer

The East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) also provides sewerage services to Albany through sewers owned and maintained by the City. Sewage is collected by a gravity flow system from El Cerrito, Richmond Annex and Albany at the Central Avenue Lift Station and from there goes downhill to the EBMUD treatment plant located near the Bay Bridge. This plant has a rated capacity of 160 million gallons per day (mgd) and is now operating considerably under capacity at 85 mgd. No development anticipated by this Plan would cause capacity problems.

Winter stormwater infiltration into the sewer system is a frequent problem in the East Bay and can significantly affect water quality in the Bay. Cracked and broken sewers in need of replacement allow rainwater to infiltrate. This results in overflows into the streets and the subsequent dumping of untreated sewage mixed with stormwater into the Bay. Albany has responded by developing a long-range sewer rehabilitation program.

Wet weather flows, including significant amounts of stormwater, are diverted to the Point Isabel Overflow Plant just north of Albany Point. Because this plant cannot presently accommodate peak wet weather flows, EBMUD is currently expanding the plant's capacity. It is expected that this expansion will improve the Bay's water quality immediately surrounding the plant.

## Gas & Electric

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is the provider of gas and electric power for Albany and most of the Bay Area. There is presently a surplus of capacity in the East Bay. The level of development proposed in the Plan is not expected to cause any problems with provision of gas and electric services to Albany.

## Cable TV

Century Cable Company operates the cable franchise for the cities of Albany, Kensington, and San Pablo. Century Cable offers 35 stations for 5,000 subscribers. Serious community concerns have been raised during the past few years regarding the overall level of service and programming quality provided by Century Cable.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal LU 8: Maintain and improve Albany's high quality educational system and other public services.**

### Policies:

LU 8.1. Evaluate the potential impacts of future major development proposals upon Albany's schools, police, fire and emergency services, and park and recreational facilities.

LU 8.2. Continue to require appropriate public service and facility impact mitigation programs, including fees upon new development and expansions to existing development, in order to maintain and improve the quality of Albany's public services and facilities.

LU 8.3. Construct a new corporation yard facility to adequately house the City's maintenance equipment and workers.

LU 8.4. Take actions to improve the level and quality of cable T.V. programming and service through potential changes to Federal Laws and better response by Century Cable.

LU 8.5 Assist and support the School District in its efforts to improve existing school facilities and provide for expanding enrollments.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN

### Gateways and Edges

A city's gateways can create a first and lasting image. They may create impressions about places found and things that might be experienced in a particular city. As such, a city's gateways should strive to provide a physical representation of a City's vitality and character.

The Civic Center intersections of Marin Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and Buchanan Street is the major gateway into the City of Albany. This branchlike crossroads demands a strong design treatment to create a positive sense of entry. Several palm trees and a grove of pine trees presently distinguish the corner of Buchanan and San Pablo. These should be maintained. The Civic Center is well located at this important entry. Future land uses at the corners of Marin and San Pablo Avenues would ideally include significant public uses. Landscaping in the public right-of-way, signs, and other public improvements can be utilized to create a gateway statement on these corners.

Other entry points into the City such as the Albany Bowl site, and Solano and Marin Avenues should also receive special design attention, which may include architectural treatments, special landscaping, and signage.

Cerrito Creek and Codornices Creek delineate the northern and southern edges of the City. Where opportunities for recognition and restoration of these natural creeks exist, they can provide a soft, distinctive boundary to Albany.

### Views

Views to San Francisco, the Bay, Albany Hill, and the Berkeley Hills are visual resources which provide respite from the urban form of the City. Protection of such views from public

viewpoints should be one aspect of City planning consideration for new development applications.

### Architecture

The urban form of the City of Albany reflects a classic grid pattern of small rectangular parcels. Albany Hill rises 338 feet above the City to provide an interesting juxtaposition of natural landscape within the built environment.

The City of Albany's architectural heritage is characterized by modest stucco and wood bungalows in variations of the Mediterranean, Tudor, and Craftsman styles. These one and two story bungalows are nestled closely together on small parcels. Over one-half of the City's homes predate World War II.

The 1950s and '60s brought development of numerous multi-family apartment complexes. This infill housing is representative of much of the design of this period; inexpensive materials and planar architecture contrast with homes of the earlier era.

Town homes and condominiums from the 1970s and '80s can be seen on Albany Hill. The City no longer permits such high density development as Gateview, Bridgewater and Bayside Commons. The Plan substitutes a new policy of conservation and lower density residential development for the Hill.

The primary issue for residential development is the numerous conversions of single story bungalows to two story homes in recent years. New policies and standards for design integrity, building scale, neighborhood character, and other quality of life concerns will support continued high quality design within the City.

San Pablo Avenue exemplifies automobile-serving, highway architecture. Opportunities for enhancing the form and function of San Pablo Avenue have been compiled into a San

## Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines and Public Improvement Study.

The charm and intimacy of Solano Avenue is directly related to the variety and scale of its storefront designs. The annual sidewalk sale and community celebration, the Solano Stroll, attracts people from the East Bay and beyond because of Solano Avenue's small town character. Design guidelines to maintain a vital ground floor commercial environment, encourage compatible building scale and architectural design in new buildings, and increase landscaping and other public improvements will support and improve Albany's "main street" environment.

### Landscaping

Trees, shrubs, and flowers are a visually pleasing contrast to the built environment. They offer shade for the pedestrian, relief from the effects of air pollution and remind us that nature can be a harmonious part of urban life.

The City does not have a comprehensive master plan for landscaping and ongoing maintenance, although a Landscape Maintenance District was formed in 1988 to provide landscaping on public rights-of-way, and to improve existing park and recreation facilities. Specific projects to be funded by Landscape and Lighting Assessment District funds include landscaping the Buchanan Street interchange and planting new and replacement trees on Solano and San Pablo Avenues.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal LU 9:**    **The positive elements of Albany's physical character: common architectural styles, significant views, and remaining natural features should be protected and enhanced.**

### Policies:

LU 9.1.    Retain the historic character of Solano Avenue as a local-serving, pedestrian-oriented shopping district. Special amenities such as outdoor seating and landscaping should be encouraged in the Design Review Ordinance, and considered as part of the Capital Improvements Program.

LU 9.2.    Develop policies to protect existing riparian habitat within the Creek Conservation Zone and restrict development in this Zone appropriately (see Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Element Policies).

LU 9.3.    Develop a comprehensive street tree planting program (see Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Element Policies).

LU 9.4.    Designate the entire crest of Albany Hill for permanent open space use and seek public dedication of these lands at the time of private development proposals through the City's Subdivision Ordinance.

LU 9.5.    Provide for the timely implementation of the future public improvements study for San Pablo Avenue through the City's Capital Improvements Program budget.

LU 9.6.    Identify the City's "Gateways" on the Land Use Map and develop appropriate architectural design and land use policies for the parcels which comprise the vicinity of the



## COMMUNITY DESIGN

### Gateways and Edges

A city's gateways can create a first and lasting image. They may create impressions about places found and things that might be experienced in a particular city. As such, a city's gateways should strive to provide a physical representation of a City's vitality and character.

The Civic Center intersections of Marin Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and Buchanan Street is the major gateway into the City of Albany. This branchlike crossroads demands a strong design treatment to create a positive sense of entry. Several palm trees and a grove of pine trees presently distinguish the corner of Buchanan and San Pablo. These should be maintained. The Civic Center is well located at this important entry. Future land uses at the corners of Marin and San Pablo Avenues would ideally include significant public uses. Landscaping in the public right-of-way, signs, and other public improvements can be utilized to create a gateway statement on these corners.

Other entry points into the City such as the Albany Bowl site, and Solano and Marin Avenues should also receive special design attention, which may include architectural treatments, special landscaping, and signage.

Cerrito Creek and Codornices Creek delineate the northern and southern edges of the City. Where opportunities for recognition and restoration of these natural creeks exist, they can provide a soft, distinctive boundary to Albany.

### Views

Views to San Francisco, the Bay, Albany Hill, and the Berkeley Hills are visual resources which provide respite from the urban form of the City. Protection of such views from public

viewpoints should be one aspect of City planning consideration for new development applications.

### Architecture

The urban form of the City of Albany reflects a classic grid pattern of small rectangular parcels. Albany Hill rises 338 feet above the City to provide an interesting juxtaposition of natural landscape within the built environment.

The City of Albany's architectural heritage is characterized by modest stucco and wood bungalows in variations of the Mediterranean, Tudor, and Craftsman styles. These one and two story bungalows are nestled closely together on small parcels. Over one-half of the City's homes predate World War II.

The 1950s and '60s brought development of numerous multi-family apartment complexes. This infill housing is representative of much of the design of this period; inexpensive materials and planar architecture contrast with homes of the earlier era.

Town homes and condominiums from the 1970s and '80s can be seen on Albany Hill. The City no longer permits such high density development as Gateview, Bridgewater and Bayside Commons. The Plan substitutes a new policy of conservation and lower density residential development for the Hill.

The primary issue for residential development is the numerous conversions of single story bungalows to two story homes in recent years. New policies and standards for design integrity, building scale, neighborhood character, and other quality of life concerns will support continued high quality design within the City.

San Pablo Avenue exemplifies automobile-serving, highway architecture. Opportunities for enhancing the form and function of San Pablo Avenue have been compiled into a San

## Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines and Public Improvement Study.

The charm and intimacy of Solano Avenue is directly related to the variety and scale of its storefront designs. The annual sidewalk sale and community celebration, the Solano Stroll, attracts people from the East Bay and beyond because of Solano Avenue's small town character. Design guidelines to maintain a vital ground floor commercial environment, encourage compatible building scale and architectural design in new buildings, and increase landscaping and other public improvements will support and improve Albany's "main street" environment.

### Landscaping

Trees, shrubs, and flowers are a visually pleasing contrast to the built environment. They offer shade for the pedestrian, relief from the effects of air pollution and remind us that nature can be a harmonious part of urban life.

The City does not have a comprehensive master plan for landscaping and ongoing maintenance, although a Landscape Maintenance District was formed in 1988 to provide landscaping on public rights-of-way, and to improve existing park and recreation facilities. Specific projects to be funded by Landscape and Lighting Assessment District funds include landscaping the Buchanan Street interchange and planting new and replacement trees on Solano and San Pablo Avenues.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal LU 9:**     **The positive elements of Albany's physical character: common architectural styles, significant views, and remaining natural features should be protected and enhanced.**

### Policies:

LU 9.1.     Retain the historic character of Solano Avenue as a local-serving, pedestrian-oriented shopping district. Special amenities such as outdoor seating and landscaping should be encouraged in the Design Review Ordinance, and considered as part of the Capital Improvements Program.

LU 9.2.     Develop policies to protect existing riparian habitat within the Creek Conservation Zone and restrict development in this Zone appropriately (see Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Element Policies).

LU 9.3.     Develop a comprehensive street tree planting program (see Conservation, Recreation and Open Space Element Policies).

LU 9.4.     Designate the entire crest of Albany Hill for permanent open space use and seek public dedication of these lands at the time of private development proposals through the City's Subdivision Ordinance.

LU 9.5.     Provide for the timely implementation of the future public improvements study for San Pablo Avenue through the City's Capital Improvements Program budget.

LU 9.6.     Identify the City's "Gateways" on the Land Use Map and develop appropriate architectural design and land use policies for the parcels which comprise the vicinity of the

gateways. Develop a gateway improvement program that includes signage, landscaping, and other public improvements suitable for these important entrypoints.



Note: In April, 1994 the Albany voters approved Measure K which reduced Albany Hill maximum residential density from 12-18 dwelling units/acre to 6-9 dwelling units/acre

0 400 ft. 1200 ft.



Source: Newman Planning Associates, 1992.  
Graphics: Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., Berkeley, CA

San Francisco Bay

Golden Gate Fields Race Track



## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

### RESIDENTIAL

- Low Density (1-17, Av. 12 du/acre)
- Medium Density (18-34, Av. 27 du/acre)
- High Density (35-63, Av. 39 du/acre)
- Planned Development (6 du/acre)
- Planned Development (9 du/acre)

### COMMERCIAL

- General (FAR: 0.95)
- Community (FAR: 1.25)
- Planned Residential/Commercial (63 dwelling units/acre, FAR: 1.5)
- Commercial Recreation (FAR: 0.5)

### INDUSTRIAL

- Commercial/Service/Light Industrial (FAR: 0.5)

### OPEN SPACE

- Park and Recreation
- Creek Conservation Zone

### INSTITUTIONAL

- PQ Public/Quasi Public
- R Research
- RRC Residential/Recreational/Commercial (18-34, Av. 27 du/acre: Far 0.95)
- RC Residential/Commercial
- RR Residential/Recreational
- A City Property
- C Churches
- ★ Gateway

CITY OF ALBANY

## Land Use Plan Map

1990 - 2010











# CIRCULATION ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Circulation Element delineates the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes and facilities, all correlated with the land use plan. It also establishes general goals and policies for implementation of the Circulation Plan. The Circulation Plan Map shows the proposed circulation system and defines standards and criteria for the location, design, and operation for each street or transportation facility.

## CIRCULATION FACILITIES

### Street Network

#### Classification of Streets

The City of Albany's streets and roads may be classified into four different categories: Major arterial streets, minor arterial streets, collector streets, and local streets. An Interstate Freeway (I-80) and a freeway interchange (I-80 and I-580) bisect the western portion of the City. These categories are described in the following paragraphs and the street network is shown on the Circulation Plan Map.

**Freeways** are routes designed to carry large traffic volumes over long distances. Freeways should serve regional, inter-city travel and should not become the optimum route for intra-city, localized travel. For these routes, access is controlled, grade crossings are separated, and medians are used to separate lanes moving in opposite directions. Interstate 80 is an eight-lane freeway through the City of Albany.

For the past ten years, the State Department of Transportation (CalTrans) has been developing plans for improving the I-80 corridor between the Carquinez Bridge and the Bay Bridge. This

project includes rebuilding the I-80/580 interchange in Albany.

**Major arterial streets** are designed to carry heavy traffic volumes. Arterials serve crosstown circulation as well as access needs for specific development. Some arterial streets have medians to control cross traffic. Separate turning lanes usually are provided, and signals control major intersections. Curb cuts for driveways should be located away from intersections and limited to essential access points. Curb parking is generally allowed, but may be banned during peak travel times to gain additional capacity. Where there are no parking lanes, turnouts for transit stops and disabled vehicles should be provided. Major arterial streets are San Pablo Avenue, Buchanan Street, Marin Avenue and Solano Avenue.

**Minor arterial streets** serve large segments of the City but do not involve citywide crosstown circulation. Major intersections are signalized but may not have separate turn lanes. These facilities include Solano Avenue (east of San Pablo), Masonic Avenue (south of Solano), Key Route Boulevard (north of Solano), Cleveland Avenue and Buchanan Street (west of I-80).

**Collector streets** are arterials designed to channel traffic from local streets into the arterial street system and to handle short trips within neighborhoods. Collectors normally have two lanes and curb parking. Collectors could also include traffic signals and turning lanes at major intersections. Existing collector streets include Brighton Avenue, Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Portland Avenue, Washington (west of San Pablo) Avenue, Solano Avenue (west of San Pablo), Santa Fe Avenue, and Peralta Avenue (south of Solano), Jackson and Pierce Streets.

**Local streets** carry low traffic volumes associated with providing access within a residential neighborhood or business district. Local streets may be loop streets or cul-de-sacs. Travel distance to a collector should be short.

within one-half mile. Pavement cross sections are designed for relatively low speed travel with parking permitted on at least one side of the street.

#### Traffic Volume/Flow Conditions

In an urban setting, the primary indicator for traffic operation performance is the Level of Service (LOS) at intersections. At a signalized location, LOS is determined by calculating the volume of conflicting through and turning traffic movements at an intersection during the one hour peak and dividing that total by the capacity designed to accommodate those turning movements. The resulting calculations are expressed by LOS ratings which range from LOS A to LOS F (Please refer to the Technical Appendix for a detailed description). The range describes increasing traffic demand, delays, and deterioration of service. The A to C range represents stable traffic flow conditions with average delay. The D to E and E to F ranges are used to describe traffic flow conditions of increasing congestion. The peak hour of traffic flow generally occurs during either the morning commute period (7 to 9 a.m.) or the evening commute period (4 to 6 p.m.). However, the presence of a unique traffic-generating land use (such as a major school or regional shopping center) could result in a peak-hour traffic flow during noncommute periods.

At a General Plan level of planning detail, it is appropriate to use daily traffic volume data to estimate LOS conditions on the street network. The daily volumes can be compared to basic carrying capacities of various street widths and an approximate LOS identified. This LOS methodology also recognizes that a percentage of the daily volume occurs in peak hours and traffic flow interruptions occur at signalized intersections during those peak hours. This methodology therefore provides a reasonable description of flow conditions.

#### Volumes and Congestion Problems

As shown on the 1989 Peak Hour Congestion map, traffic volumes vary substantially among the key streets in Albany. Volumes are high on through routes, including Buchanan Street, Marin Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and Solano Avenue. Solano Avenue also serves a combination of through traffic and concentrated commercial development.

The 1989 Peak Hour Congestion map depicts roadway segments and intersections operating with significant congestion characteristics of LOS "D" or worse. As indicated in the Congestion map, a majority of the Albany street segments are operating at stable peak hour flows characteristic of LOS C or better. Congestion levels are highest along portions of San Pablo Avenue, Marin Avenue, Solano Avenue, Pierce Street and Key Route Boulevard.

Traffic congestion is most pronounced along Interstate 80 (I-80). During both the A.M. peak period (westbound) and P.M. peak period (eastbound), I-80 experiences severe congestion in the LOS E-F range. With severe congestion along I-80, motorists can divert to San Pablo Avenue, the only major parallel route. However, San Pablo Avenue congestion can result in further diversion to other City streets.

#### **Transit Services**

The City of Albany does not have direct control over transit services. Currently, transit service is provided directly by AC Transit and indirectly by BART. AC Transit bus routes serve local and inter-city travel as well as express bus links to San Francisco. There are several lines connecting Albany with UC Berkeley, including a commute hour service that goes from Albany Village to the Campus.

While there is no BART station in Albany, various AC Transit routes link with the El Cerrito Plaza and North Berkeley stations. With



these links, transit access is available through most of the Bay Area.

Bus service throughout Albany is reasonably good but funding limitations and service reductions are possible. BART service is being enhanced through increased train frequency.

Transportation services for seniors and the handicapped are provided through the Albany Senior Center. The Center administers funds made available through the California Transportation Development Act and the 1986 County transportation tax fund Measure B. These funds subsidize van rides and taxi vouchers. The City also provides a shopping van for seniors who need transportation for grocery shopping.

## **Bikeways**

### Classification of Facilities

Bikeway facilities fall within three basic categories: Bike paths, bike lanes, and bike routes. These facilities are defined by CalTrans as follows:

Class I Bikeway (Bike Path): provides for bicycle travel on a right of way completely separated from any street or highway.

Class II Bikeway (Bike Lane): provides a striped lane for one-way bike travel on a street or highway.

Class III Bikeway (Bike Route): provides for shared use with pedestrian or motor vehicle traffic.

### Current Facilities

Currently, no specific bikeways have been implemented in the City, except along the Oholone Greenway (BART Linear Park). However, the streets designated for bike routes in the Plan (and other local and collector streets) are being used for bicycle travel.

A system of bikeways in Albany is becoming necessary as the number of bicyclists increases both in Albany and in its neighboring cities. Berkeley has established a bikeway system with portions of its routes close to Albany on Monterey Avenue, Ensenada Avenue, Gilman Street, and to the Albany City limits on the BART linear park. It is desirable for Albany to connect with this existing system at convenient points. El Cerrito does not have a bikeway system at this time, although it is possible to project where connections to such a system would be appropriate.

### Bikeway System

A bikeway system should be established based upon the following considerations: the points of likely destination such as schools, parks, the Library, Post Office, and BART station; through streets providing the greatest safety; routes north, south, east, and west; connections to the Berkeley system; and flat terrain to enable as many cyclists as possible to use the system.

The major east-west routes that bike riders would use are along Marin and Washington. The north-south routes are along Pierce Street, Jackson Street, the BART linear park, and Santa Fe Avenue. The short north-south connection between Washington and Marin provides access to Cornell School, the Library, and Post Office. The route along Key Route connects the High School and Memorial Park to El Cerrito, Cougar Field.

### Pedestrian Trail and Path System

Because of Albany's relatively small and compact nature, walking to most destinations is a practical alternative. The Plan recommends that a formal trail and path system be developed providing linkages across the community and with park and recreational facilities.

There are two other important aspects of an adequate pedestrian and trail system. First, the sidewalks, pathways and trails should be safe and unhindered by street furniture, newspaper

vending machines or telephone booths. Second, the pedestrian facilities should be accessible to all with curb cuts being made whenever a street, sidewalk, pathway or trail is developed or improved. This Element includes policies to this effect.

## PARKING

Parking for both residential and commercial areas is a concern in Albany. Even the modest new development permitted under the Plan would increase parking demand.

The problem in residential areas arises because many houses in Albany either have no garages, have garages too small to accommodate modern cars, or do not use their garage for parking. This situation increases the demand for on-street parking. Moreover, most lots in Albany are not large enough to provide off-street parking for more than one car.

The residential parking issue is further complicated by the voter-mandated requirement that two parking spaces be provided per unit. This effectively limits development potential to one unit on many Albany parcels zoned for greater density as well as for single-family units desiring a secondary dwelling unit. The Plan contains a recommendation that a revised set of residential parking standards be brought before the voters to allow for variation depending on the type or size of dwelling unit.

The parking issue in commercial areas primarily concerns Solano Avenue. The pedestrian scale of this street requires that parking be available, but that it not interrupt the retail frontage. Many shoppers presently park on side streets abutting Solano and thus compete with residents who rely on those areas for residential parking. Because San Pablo Avenue is more auto-oriented and contains larger parcels than Solano Avenue, parking lots have been, and can be, established without significantly affecting the

commercial character of San Pablo. Development guidelines and design standards for such parking lots have been identified in the San Pablo Avenue Corridor Design Guidelines and Public Improvement Study.

## TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS

Projections of population, housing, and commercial space in the Plan indicate that growth in Albany will be moderate. The increase in population expected by 2010 is about 12%, the increase in the number of housing units forecast is 15.5%, and the increase in commercial square footage is approximately 17%. The impacts of this growth in terms of traffic and circulation are projected to be a City-wide 12% increase in traffic with most of the increase focused on the two key intersections: San Pablo/Marin and San Pablo/Solano.

Residential traffic growth would be minimal and most collector streets (and virtually all local streets) would experience no measurable changes in traffic flow. Commercial development along San Pablo and Solano Avenues would be approximately 17% above existing levels and traffic volumes on these streets would likely increase by approximately 15-20%.

The traffic increases associated with the Plan would result in some congestion problems, particularly at the key intersections of San Pablo/Marin and San Pablo/Solano. These problems could be mitigated through specific widening and/or restriping at these intersections. In addition to expected traffic increases, the pending I-80 Highway corridor improvements may adversely impact San Pablo Avenue due to traffic being diverted to local streets during certain construction periods. Given that the current construction time period is between 5-7 years, intersection improvements are proposed to be completed by Caltrans to accommodate additional traffic.



More intensive commercial development than anticipated by the Plan would require more extensive traffic improvements, particularly along San Pablo and Solano Avenues.

## **MINIMIZING RELIANCE ON THE AUTOMOBILE**

The City of Albany is committed to working toward an overall goal of reducing reliance on the automobile as the primary means of transportation. This goal is shared by local and regional groups focused on improving air quality and reducing congestion.

Albany is particularly well situated to accomplish this goal because of the close proximity of the major commercial streets to most homes and the good access to mass transit, including AC Transit and BART. Specific policies have been included in the plan to reduce reliance on the automobile, including continuing to fulfill the mandates of the City's Trip Reduction Ordinance, completing the trail, pathway and bike route system for the City, and promoting alternative means of transportation whenever possible.

## **CIRCULATION GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Goal CIRC 1: Preserve the character of residential areas near and on arterial streets.**

### **Policies:**

CIRC 1.1. Evaluate the traffic and circulation along Kains and Adams Streets. Take advantage of San Pablo Avenue or an east-west street for primary access. Discourage or prevent the use of Kains and Adams for primary access to non-residential uses.

CIRC 1.2. Delete the designation of "minor arterial" for Cornell Avenue.

CIRC 1.3. Support staging and careful scheduling of I-80 corridor improvements to reduce traffic diversion onto City streets.

CIRC 1.4. Concentrate East/West through traffic along Marin and Solano Avenues, and discourage such traffic from Washington and Portland.

CIRC 1.5. Concentrate North/South through traffic along Masonic, Key Route and Santa Fe (all east of San Pablo Avenue).

CIRC 1.6. The following streets have been redesignated on the Circulation Plan Map:

- A. Jackson Street between Solano Avenue and the northerly terminus: downgrade from "Minor Arterial" to "Collector";
- B. Washington Avenue between Cleveland Avenue and Jackson Street: downgrade from "Minor Arterial" to "Local";
- C. Solano Avenue between San Pablo Avenue to East City Limit: upgrade from "Minor" to "Major Arterial".

CIRC 1.7 Review and consider the use of roadway features such as speed bumps, traffic diverters, and other methods to limit through traffic and high speeds on residential streets. This tool should be considered on a City-wide basis and potential impacts to adjacent streets due to changing travel patterns should be fully addressed.



**Goal CIRC 2: Protect residential neighborhoods from excessive parking demands.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 2.1. Evaluate the on-street parking use and capacity along Kains and Adams and consider more stringent regulation including timed parking or parking permits. Similarly, consider the potential impacts of more stringent parking regulation on adjacent residential streets.

CIRC 2.2. Evaluate the impacts of increased parking demand on streets adjacent to Solano Avenue. Consider the potential impacts of more stringent parking regulation on nearby residential streets.

CIRC 2.3. Evaluate the impacts of overflow parking from the University Village on adjacent streets and private parking areas. Consider more stringent parking regulation, plus agreement with the University of California to provide more on-site parking or take steps to limit car ownership by residents.

**Goal CIRC 3: Maintain adequate circulation throughout the City and improve the parking capacity on Solano and San Pablo Avenues.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 3.1. Monitor critical intersections (e.g., Buchanan/Jackson, Buchanan/San Pablo, Solano/San Pablo, Marin/Santa Fe, Marin/Key Route) for indications of necessary traffic improvements. Develop specific improvement plans to reduce impacts of increased traffic and incorporate into the City's Capital Improvements Plan.

CIRC 3.2. Conduct more detailed studies to address the traffic effects and needed

improvements associated with specific development proposals.

CIRC 3.3. Establish funding mechanisms to acquire and develop municipal parking facilities in the City's commercial areas along Solano and San Pablo Avenue, including an in-lieu fee for new development, expansion/intensification of existing commercial uses, or major change of use, as parcels become available.

CIRC 3.4. Coordinate street and freeway improvements with other jurisdictions as well as with CalTrans.

**Goal CIRC 4: Support public transit, and other means to reduce reliance on the automobile as the primary means of transportation.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 4.1. Monitor existing and proposed transit service for responsiveness to residents' and employers' needs.

CIRC 4.2. Encourage the continuation of para-transit services operated through the Albany Senior Center.

CIRC 4.3. Continue to work with the City's Trip Reduction Ordinance and continue to develop programs and incentives for the use of carpools, staggered work hours, bicycling, walking and the increased use of public transit for residents and employees in the community.

CIRC 4.4. Assure that the shuttle service between Albany Village and the UC Campus is maintained.

CIRC 4.5 Increase pedestrian travel throughout the City by connecting major pathway systems such as the BART linear park to other City, regional, and State Parks, and other community facilities.

CIRC 4.6 Increase disabled access throughout the City by installing curb cuts wherever feasible as part of new construction, repair or improvements to streets, sidewalks, pathways and trails.

CIRC 4.7 Assure that sidewalks, pathways and trails used by pedestrians are safe and provide unhindered access for all.

**Goal CIRC 5: Ensure that the I-80 reconstruction project meets the City's goals for improved earthquake safety on the Buchanan / I - 80 / 580 interchange and the Buchanan Street overpass, improved automobile safety of the interchange, improved pedestrian and bicycle safety of the interchange, and improved access to the Albany Waterfront.**

**Policies:**

CIRC 5.1. Continue to monitor the I-80 reconstruction project plans and work with Caltrans to include earthquake safety, automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian safety and Waterfront access in any new plans.

CIRC 5.2. Coordinate the planning and development of the Bay Trail in Albany with the overall access and safety improvements to the Buchanan/I-80/580 interchange.

CIRC 5.3. Accept ramp metering of the Buchanan/I-80 interchange only if operational safety improvements are completed simultaneously and full analysis of level of service and other traffic-related impacts to Golden Gate Fields Racetrack are completed and considered.

**Goal CIRC 6: Improve and enhance the City's bicycle route and path system.**

**Policies:**





CIRC 6.1. Develop a plan for bike routes for Albany, linking existing bike paths and routes in Berkeley and El Cerrito. Implement this plan as part of the City's overall road maintenance and traffic sign program within the annual capital projects budget, as well as through specific transportation funding.

CIRC 6.2 Work to obtain funding sources to develop the Bay Trail in Albany and along the entire East Bay Shoreline corridor as an alternative, parallel route to I-80.





**PEAK HOUR CONGESTION**

-  Congested Intersections
-  Congested Streets
-  Congested streets when racetrack is operating
-  4,000 1988 average daily volumes (24 hour two-way volumes)

Note: The Buchanan Street and freeway interchange design is based on a 1989 Caltrans plan and is subject to change.



Source: Omni-Means, Inc., Transportation Engineers, 1989.  
 Graphics: Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., Berkeley, CA



CITY OF ALBANY  
**1989 Peak Hour Congestion**  
 1990 - 2010





## STREETS

-  Major Arterial  
 Minor Arterial  
 Collector

Note: The proposed layout of Buchanan Street, as designed on the plan, may be subject to revision.

0 400 ft. 1200 ft.



Source: Omni-Means, Inc., Transportation Engineers, 1989.

Graphics: Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., Berkeley, CA



CITY OF ALBANY

# Circulation Plan Map

1990 - 2010











# HOUSING ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Housing Element is one of the seven State-mandated elements of Albany's General Plan. California Government Code § 65583 requires that a housing element “. . . shall consist of an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, and quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing and mobile homes, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.”

The Housing Element was last revised and adopted in January, 1985, in conformance with State law. This Element represents an update of the 1985 effort and fulfills the 1990 State law housing element requirements.

As noted in the General Plan Introduction, the City has sought to involve all segments of the Albany community in the preparation of the General Plan and Housing Element update. Three public workshops were held at strategic points in the planning process and every household was notified via the Albany Newsette, as well as through posting and other publicized notices. Additional information updating the community about progress on the General Plan was published in the Newsette. Finally, numerous public hearings were noticed and held on the entire Draft General Plan.

# EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

## Brief Profile of Albany Housing

Albany is a mature, densely-settled residential community of about 16,300 people bordered on the north by Richmond and El Cerrito, on the south and east by Berkeley, and on the west by the San Francisco Bay. It is one of the most densely populated communities in the State, with an average density of 85 persons/acre.

The community is typically characterized by small, one-story, single-family houses on small, narrow lots, interspersed with two-family and multi-family apartment buildings. The desirability of Albany as a close-in residential area has brought an increased number of young couples who have begun adding second stories to their single-family houses.

Albany is an essentially built-out community. Aside from Albany Hill and the Waterfront area, there is very little vacant land available for development. This limits opportunities for new housing development. However, future housing development opportunities do exist in scattered vacant lots throughout the City and through redevelopment. These sites are shown on the Housing Opportunity Map.

Major highlights of the housing profile in Albany are the following:

- Between 1980 and 1990, Albany added 433 housing units.
- The total number of households increased by about 6 percent between 1980 and 1990, while the population grew 8 percent. Household size during this period increased from 2.18 to 2.26 persons.
- Between 1980 and 1990, the number of people renting a home or apartment in Albany increased by 11 percent.

- Between 1980 and 1990, the percentage of single-headed households with children increased by 18.5 percent.
- 45% percent of Albany's 1980 households, excluding Albany Village, were low income, as defined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. (If Albany Village households are included, this percentage is 50%).
- Approximately 21 percent of Albany renters paid over 35% of their income for housing in 1980.
- Much of the housing for sale in Albany is priced beyond the means of its current residents. The average price for a single-family home rose from 120,000 in 1985 to 220,000 in 1990, or an increase of 83 percent. The median household income during the same period is estimated to have increased only 11 percent.
- Except for portions of Albany Hill and the Hill Lumber site, there is very little land available for new housing. Redevelopment of some parcels to a higher density is possible under current zoning.

In summary, the growth in housing during 1980-90 has nearly kept pace with population and new household formation at least in numerical terms. However, housing affordability has most likely become an even more pronounced issue given the increase in housing prices and the characteristically high percentage of low income households in Albany.

## **Population and Employment Trends**

### Demographics

Albany's 1990 population was 16,327, representing an increase of 8 percent since 1980. The number of households in Albany increased by 6 percent since 1980, from 6,779 to 7,192.

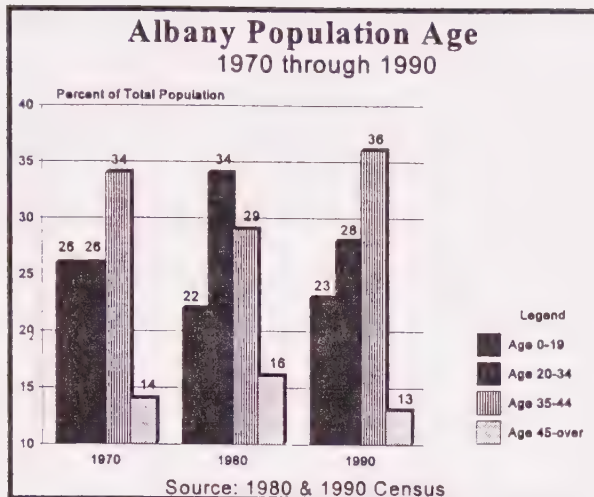
Throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, people are living longer, having fewer children, divorcing more frequently, and choosing to live in smaller households.

Projections of Albany population and housing characteristics made for the year 2005 by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) show that this relationship between growth in population and growth in the number of households is expected to remain. In fact, the average household size in Albany is expected to decrease from 2.2 persons per household in 1990 to 2.17 in 2005, despite the modest interim increase shown in Albany's 1990 average household size. ABAG does not have population projections to 2010 for Albany, but indicates that they expect the average household size in 2005 to remain constant to 2010.

The Albany population was 70 percent Caucasian in 1990, compared with a County-wide Caucasian population of 53 percent. The largest non-white group was Asian/Pacific Islanders (19.6 percent), a population group which has more than doubled in the city since 1970. African-Americans comprise 6 percent of the 1990 Albany population and 18 percent of the County-wide population. Thus, Albany is a community that is more Caucasian and more Asian/Pacific Islander than the rest of Alameda County.

The age profile of Albany's residents between 1970 and 1990 is depicted in the figure following on the next page. While the percentage of children and senior citizens has remained relatively constant, an increase in the percentage of adults aged 35-64 between 1980 and 1990 is evident.





### Employment

According to ABAG's 1990 Projections, the number of jobs in Albany was 4,236, or less than 1 percent of the total number of jobs in Alameda County. Of these jobs, 67 percent were retail and service jobs.

ABAG's forecast of jobs in Albany show the number of jobs increasing significantly until the year 2005 (estimated at 2000 new jobs or a 48 percent increase.) Most of these jobs will be in the service and retail sectors, strengthening the already dominant position of this sector in Albany. This trend is consistent with other residential communities in the Bay Area.

### Housing Characteristics and Needs

This section uses figures provided by the 1990 Census to analyze the characteristics of housing in Albany.

#### Housing Characteristics

In 1990, the total number of housing units in Albany reported by the Census was 7,468, of which 3.6% were vacant. By contrast, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board showed an overall vacancy rate of 2.1 percent in October, 1989.

The 1990 Census shows that 53 percent of Albany's housing consisted of single-family

dwellings, 35 percent consisted of buildings of 5 or more units and 10 percent consisted of 2-4 unit buildings. Although Albany's housing is still predominantly single-family, 45 percent is multi-family housing. In fact, multi-family housing of five or more units accounted for 88 percent of the new units created since 1980.

Through direct inspection throughout the City, there are no mobile homes or converted vans being used for housing in Albany. This observation differs from the 1990 Census which reported that 74 mobile homes or vans were being used for permanent housing. The Census Bureau staff has since indicated that these 74 units can probably be explained as a misunderstanding by residents completing the census forms about what this housing category actually included.

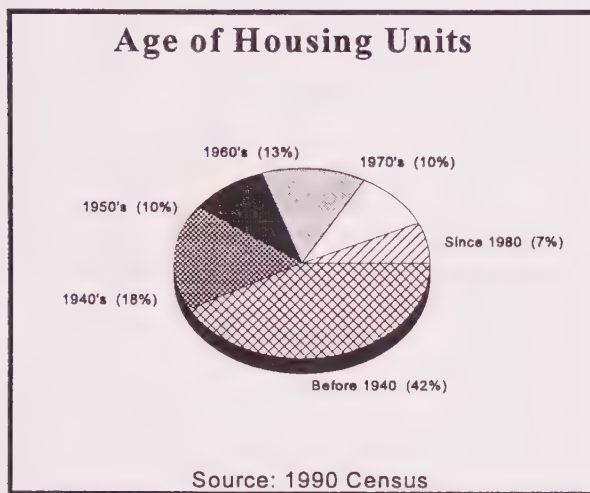
In 1980, the Census showed 6.9 percent of Albany's housing stock as overcrowded. By 1990, this percentage had dropped to 5.5 percent. The 1990 Census indicates that 0.7% (51 units) of owner-occupied housing had more than 1 person per room and 4.8% (348 units) of rental housing units were overcrowded.

In 1980, 27 percent of the housing units had one bedroom or less, 50 percent had two bedrooms, 19 percent had three bedrooms and 4 percent had four bedrooms or more. These figures reinforce the picture of Albany housing units as predominantly small. Over 75 percent of all units had two bedrooms or less. The 1990 Census shows a reduction in the percentage of smallest units and slight increase in units with a greater number of bedrooms: 24% had one or fewer bedrooms, 49% had 2 bedrooms, 21% had three bedrooms and over 5% had four or more bedrooms. This increase in larger homes reflects the recent trend toward remodeling and expanding the typically small, two bedroom, one bath home.

Albany's single-family homes, excluding those on Albany Hill, were primarily built during the



1920's. Typically, these houses were built as one-story stucco over frame structures. The 1990 Census showed that 42% of housing in Albany was built before 1940, as indicated in the figure below. In the late 1960's and 1970's, single-family dwelling units in multi-family zones were frequently demolished by developers and new multi-family units were built in their place.



The Albany Planning Department performed a windshield survey of housing conditions in April, 1992. The survey rated housing conditions in one of three categories:

- 1) "Good" Condition: The building is basically sound, with no defects or only minor defects and is not a visual eyesore.
- 2) "Fair" Condition: The building is in need of rehabilitation, but with relatively minor repairs could be restored to a standard condition.
- 3) "Poor" Condition: The building is so structurally unsound that it creates a health and safety hazard and/or visual eyesore.

According to the 1990 U.S. Census reports, there were 7,468 total housing units in Albany. Of those, 4,408 units were located outside of Census tract #4204 (the location of the U.C.

Village specialized student housing project). For the purposes of this study, all housing units located within tract #4204 were excluded from the survey. The housing conditions in Albany can be summarized as follows:

1992 HOUSING CONDITIONS		
Rating	Number of Units	% of Units
Good Condition	4203	97.3%
Fair Condition	188	2.5%
Poor Condition	17	0.2%
Total	4408	100%

Existing programs through the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) provide grants and loans for minor and major home repairs. In 1991, Albany households received the following loans and grants from HCD: two "mini" loans (maximum \$3,000), 20 Minor Home Repair grants (Maximum \$500), and two Owner Rehabilitation loans (maximum \$35,000). HCD informs the City that funding will remain stable in the near future for these programs. Given the very few number of units identified needing major repairs (less than 3% of all units), the City believes that existing programs will meet these needs. The City will increase public awareness about these opportunities through a new housing-related public information program.

Vacancy Rates & Household Size				
	Vacancy Rates		Household Size	
	1985	1990	1985	1990
Albany	3.99	2.59	2.206	2.25
Alameda County	3.70	1.89	2.53	2.30
Source: Department of Finance Population Estimates				

The table above compares average household size and housing vacancy rates for Albany and Alameda County between 1985-1990. Household size increased slightly in Albany while it fell in the County as a whole. This is confirmed by the 1990 Census which estimates Albany's household size at 2.26. Housing vacancy rates are an indication of whether the housing market is in balance and can provide a range of choices and prices to those seeking housing. ABAG has set a regional goal for a 4.5% housing vacancy rate. Since 1985, vacancy rates in Albany and Alameda County have dropped. However, the 1990 Census estimated vacancy rates in Albany at 3.7% which is close to the 1985 rate and substantially higher than the Countywide average.

#### Income of Albany Residents

ABAG projected the 1990 mean household income for Albany at \$34,800. This figure is less than the Alameda County mean household income of \$40,100, and places Albany as the third lowest in the County, just above Berkeley and Oakland. The next table shows ABAG's income projections for Albany, Alameda County and the Bay Area.

Projected Mean Income 1980 - 2000			
Year	Albany	Alameda Co.	Bay Area
1980	\$31,276	\$35,609	\$39,730
1985	33,200	37,000	43,300
1990	34,800	40,100	46,200
1995	36,900	43,000	48,900
2000	38,300	45,100	51,500
Source: ABAG "Projections '90"			

For purposes of defining very low, low, median and above median income, the California Department of Housing and Community Development uses the income figures derived from the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development, as follows:

1990 Income Guidelines		
Very Low Income	50% of County Median	\$23,400
Low Income	80% of County Median	\$37,450
Median Income	Alameda County	\$46,800
Moderate Income	120% of County Median	\$56,150
Source: California Dept. of Housing & Community Development, April 1991		

In 1980, 50 percent of Albany households (45 percent without the University Village households) had incomes that were 80 percent of, or lower than, the Bay Area median income. Of these, 30 percent were classified as "very low income." These figures will be updated as more 1990 Census data becomes available. If the same percentages were to apply in 1990, 3,596 households would have income below median and 2,157 households would be low income.

There are two factors accounting for this high proportion of low income residents. First, University Village, a 920-unit married student



housing complex, shows that 78 percent of it's residents were regarded as low income in 1980. Second, many senior citizens are regarded as low income because of their limited ability to have retirement and other income keep pace with inflation. Figures developed by the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department show that in 1980, 47.8 percent of Albany households headed by someone 62 or older had incomes below 50 percent of the Alameda County median household income.

#### Income Related to Housing Costs

For many years, state and federal housing cost guidelines assumed that no one should have to pay more than 25 percent of their income for housing. As housing costs rose in the late 1970s, this figure was raised to 30 percent for renters and 35 percent for buyers. According to 1980 census figures for Albany, 29

percent of the renter households were paying more than 35 percent of their household income for housing, and 46 percent were paying 25 percent or more. These figures include University Village households. Without University Village households, 35 percent of the renters are paying over 35 percent of their income for rent and 54 percent are paying over 25 percent. In owner-occupied houses, 17 percent of the occupants were paying 25 percent or more of their income for housing and 8 percent were paying over 35 percent.

The table on this page shows the number of households (both owners and renters) who paid more than 35 percent of their income on housing in 1980. This table includes updated information to reflect the number of 1990 households in Albany. The table shows that over 20 percent of the City's low and moderate income residents overpaid for housing (excluding University Village residents).

According to a review of home sales figures between September, 1990 and July, 1991, the average price paid for a single-family home in Albany was \$222,000.

If we use the average home sale price of \$220,000, a buyer would need a gross annual household income of \$48,515 to be able to afford the average home. This homebuyer would be making payments of \$1,415 per month, assuming a 20 percent downpayment with a 30-year mortgage and a nine percent interest rate.

Rents in Albany do not reflect this high cost of home ownership to the same degree. Several factors account for this trend, including longevity of tenants and slower turnover of rental units. Studies of local newspapers during 1990-91, showed that apartment and housing rentals were available for a low of \$500 per month for a one bedroom flat to a high of \$1,200 per month for a three bedroom, two bath duplex. Two bedroom apartments ranged from \$650 to \$835 per month. Shared rentals were

Households Overpaying for Housing (1990)						
	Renter		Owner		Total	
	#	Overpaying %	#	Overpaying %	#	Overpaying %
<b>1980 Income</b>						
\$0-5,000	199	69%	136	36%	335	75%
5-10,000	153	34%	95	11%	248	25%
10-15,000	68	21%	84	13%	152	18%
15-20,000	19	7%	78	12%	97	9%
20,000+	0	0%	87	3%	87	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Overpaying</b>						
Source: Derived by applying the distribution of low and moderate income households overpaying in 1980 (from 1980 U.S. Census) to the number of households in Albany as of 1990 (based on 1990 U.S. Census).						



available at from \$350 to \$550 per bedroom per month plus utilities.

Based on the 30%-of-income standard, these house and apartment rentals would require incomes of \$20,000 to \$48,000 per year. With an estimated 1990 median household income in Albany of \$34,800, it appears that rental units are not as far out of line with incomes as are home sale prices.

## **Special Needs**

### Students and Seniors

Two special needs groups are students and seniors. These groups have a higher-than-average representation in the Albany population and are often low-income.

University Village, a married student housing complex owned by the University of California, represents about 17 percent of the Albany population. Of the University Village residents, 78% were low income under State guidelines in 1980. In addition to this housing, students live in other parts of Albany. There are no figures available for the total number of students living in Albany. There are no specialized housing programs for low income students in Alameda County.

In 1990, people over 65 represented 13 percent of Albany's population, compared to 10 percent for Alameda County. In general, seniors have lower than average income because they are usually no longer employed and often living on fixed incomes. Of the 2,117 seniors living in Albany, 1,144 (74%) lived in owner-occupied housing and 397 (26%) lived in rental housing. The 1990 Census shows the total number of seniors in occupied housing units is 1,541. The remaining 576 seniors live either in group homes or with their extended family headed by younger members of the household.

As a group, seniors tend to have more affordable housing than newcomers to the

housing market. Seniors who own their homes typically bought them before prices and mortgage rates increased so steeply during the late 1970s and '80s, and before Proposition 13 took effect in 1978. Some are living in homes for which the mortgage has been paid off. As a result, they have affordable housing even though they may be classified as having low incomes. The other side of the coin is that if a home-owning senior wishes to move, he or she often cannot afford to because property values, mortgage rates, and property taxes are all significantly higher now than 15 years ago.

For the elderly, special physical needs include few stairs or levels in a housing unit, affordability, and close proximity to public transit and shopping.

### Large Families

Of Albany's 7,192 occupied housing units in 1990, it is estimated based on 1990 Census data that only 347 (about 5 percent) were occupied by families of five or more persons. Families of two or three persons are estimated to comprise the largest number of households at 3,805 (52 percent.)

From 1985-90, approximately 140 second story additions have been approved and built. These new bedrooms will assist in meeting the needs of growing families and are a reflection of the need to adapt the typical two bedroom, one bath bungalow house in Albany.

### Disabled Residents

Accessible housing units are an important issue for disabled residents, as is affordable housing. In 1980, Albany had 698 persons with a work disability and 440 persons (295 of them elderly) with a public transit disability. It is not known how many of these people live in housing that accommodates their disability. Until recently there was no housing specifically addressing the needs of the handicapped. In 1986, a 30-unit building at 820 Kains Street included 2 units specifically designed for the handicapped. In

addition, the building has an elevator, making the housing much more accessible than units with only stairways.

The City also participates in an annual residential access program using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. This program is administered through the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, and enables access ramps and other improvements such as widening doorways and bathroom modifications to be made to existing homes throughout Albany. Since 1985, five ramps have been constructed for disabled residents.

#### Single-headed and Female-headed Households

The number of single-headed households with children increased by 18.5 percent between 1980 and 1990. Of 642 families, 81 percent of these were female-headed households.

Low cost housing is a key issue for this group. Specifically, affordable housing with more than one bedroom and protected places for children to play is needed.

#### Housing Discrimination

Operation Sentinel, a non-profit agency based in Oakland, monitors discrimination in housing in Alameda County through a Landlord Tenant Assistance Project. According to Operation Sentinel staff, the current trend in housing discrimination is "anti-child" landlords. There were five cases of housing discrimination involving Albany housing units in 1988. Four of these were regarding difficulties in finding housing for families with children. Although some of these cases can be resolved by mediation with the landlord, two of the five Albany cases were referred to attorneys for litigation.

#### Homelessness

Homelessness has become a significant and widely recognized issue during the past ten years. In Alameda County, the Emergency Services Network (ESN) annually prepares a

report on the homeless population. The most recent data available is from a 1989 document entitled *Report on Homelessness in Alameda County*. The profile information contained in this section is derived from the Report.

The following profile of homeless people in Alameda County is based on a total, unduplicated count of people requesting shelter in Alameda County during a one week period in February, 1989. It does not include people who have given up looking for shelter or who are living on the street, in parks, automobiles, etc.

- 69 percent of requests for shelter were from women and children, and 62 percent of all requests were from families with children.
- The number of people requesting shelter has increased 126 percent since 1985.
- 84 percent of people who requested shelter listed Alameda County as their primary place of residence.
- Six people, or 0.3 percent, listed Albany as their primary place of residence.

The Albany Senior Center acts as a sort of social services referral center for the City. The Senior Center Director reported that four homeless people have requested help from the Center during the past six years. All were male, fairly young (the oldest was 52) and all had used up their various social service benefits.

The 1990 Census indicated that no homeless persons were visible to census takers on Albany's streets during their field inspections in early 1990.

#### Emergency and Transitional Housing

There are no emergency shelters for homeless people in Albany (based on 1990 Census data and review of Alameda County and ESN records). However, the 711 Harrison Street



Shelter is located only a block from Albany (just outside Albany Village.)

The City's Zoning Ordinance permits boarding and rooming houses in the R-3, Residential High Density District, subject to a conditional use permit procedure. There are no restrictions on the number of unrelated individuals living in any residential district provided that only one kitchen per dwelling unit exists. The Villa Motel contains 30 single-room occupancy units (SROs) which provide a source of transitional housing in Albany.

It is obvious that the extent of the homeless problem far exceeds the resources of local government, particularly for small cities such as Albany. Alameda County has taken the initiative in identifying the extent of this problem and has developed a framework to coordinate funding and provision of shelter and transitional housing facilities.

The City will continue to cooperate with County efforts such as the County Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan (CHAP) and to participate in the Alameda County Housing Council.

### **Albany's Share of Regional Need For Low Income Housing**

State law requires that the regional need for low income housing, as determined by ABAG, be allocated in such a way as to "avoid further impaction of localities with relatively high proportions of lower-income households." ABAG's allocation method averages the existing income range of a city's households with the same figures for the county and region. Those cities with above-average numbers of lower-income households (such as Albany) are allocated a slightly smaller percentage of the new lower-income housing unit needs. Cities with more affluent populations are expected to provide higher numbers of new lower-income housing units.

<b>Albany's Projected Housing Need by Income Category</b>				
<b>TOTAL NEED</b>	<b>VERY LOW</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>ABOVE MODERATE</b>
86 (100%)	23 (27%)	15 (17%)	18 (21%)	30 (35%)
Source: "ABAG Housing Needs Determination," Jan. 1989.				

The methodology for assigning regional housing need shares has been changed somewhat to give more weight to the actual capacity of a city for new development given available land, zoning regulations and land use restrictions, and the possibilities for changing any of these. The previous table shows ABAG's projected housing need for Albany during 1988-1995.

Between 1988 and 1990, 12 new housing units were constructed, or 14 percent of the 1995 housing needs goal of 86 units. All of these units were market rate. During this period, eight second units were approved and six of these constructed. These units are a source of very low- and low-income housing. In addition, since 1988, 103 second units have been legalized and permits for six new second units were granted. All of these units are estimated to be affordable to very low- and low-income households, thereby satisfying 16% of the City's projected low income housing need.

## **RESTRAINTS ON SOLUTIONS TO HOUSING NEEDS**

### **Governmental Constraints**

Restraints on a city's overall ability to meet housing needs are sometimes found in governmental controls, such as performance standards, zoning, fees, exactions, and code enforcement. These factors can apply not only to the production of new housing, but also to the



remodeling, rehabilitation or maintenance of existing housing.

This section examines Albany's land use regulations, zoning densities, project review procedures and permit fees, code enforcement, property tax rates, and other zoning requirements to assess their impact on providing housing units.

#### Land Use Patterns and Restrictions

Albany's land use designations have been relatively stable for many years. The first codified set of zoning regulations was enacted in 1958. The dominant designation is residential, with 43% of Albany's land area in residential uses. Almost three quarters of that residential land is occupied by single-family dwellings.

A 1978 voter initiative re-zoned a large area of the City from various multi-family designations to single-family uses (R-1). This included all of the residentially zoned areas in the blocks bounded by Stannage, Masonic, Codornices Creek and Washington, as well as partial blocks on both sides of Stannage north of Washington, partial blocks on the west side of Stannage south of

Washington and partial blocks on the south side of Brighton between Kains and Masonic. A total of 29 blocks were affected by this major zoning change, reflecting an apparent desire by the residents to retain a more single-family neighborhood character in the City. There are

now 74 multi-family developments in this R-1 area. These existing projects will be allowed to remain as legal non-conforming uses although they could not be rebuilt to the same density if destroyed.

ALBANY RESIDENTIAL ZONING/DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS			
District	Density	Coverage	Height
R-1: Single-Family	11.6 Units/Acre	50%	28-35 Ft.
R-2: Multi-Family	35 Units/Acre	50%	35 Ft.
6R-3: Multi-Family	56-69 Units/Acre	70%	45 Ft.
R-4: Towers	87 Units/Acre	Use Permit	Use Permit
HD-12: Hillside	12 Units/Acre	50%	28-40 Ft.
HD-18: Hillside	18 Units/Acre	50%	28-40 Ft.

The two major streets, San Pablo and Solano, are zoned for commercial activities but residential uses are also allowed. The only exclusively non-residential areas are the waterfront lands and public and quasi-public lands in

the City such as parks and schools.

REPRESENTATIVE MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING PROJECTS 1980-90			
Project	Lot Size/ Zoning	Permitted Density	Approved Density
417-419 Evelyn	15,290 SF/R-3	24 Units	24 Units
820 Kains	19,000 SF/R-3	30 Units	30 Units
412 Kains	5,000 SF/R-3	5 Units	4 Units
787-791 Taft	35,244 SF/HD-18	14 Units	14 Units
535 Pierce	6.5 Net Acres/R-4	566 Units	235 Units
545 Pierce	3.5 Net Acres/R-4	304 Units	104 Units

#### Zoning Densities

Zoning densities in Albany begin at approximately 12 units per acre, a density that

would be considered high in outlying areas. For instance, most new suburban subdivisions have 4-5 single-family houses per acre, with town-house developments averaging ten units per acre.

Multi-unit residential densities begin at 35 units per acre and go as high as 87 units per acre, although this maximum density is no longer permitted.

Second units are allowed in Albany with a use permit, but they are controlled by the constraints of lot size (minimum 3,750 square feet), lot coverage (maximum 50%) and parking requirements. During 1987-90, the City changed second unit requirements

to legalize many existing, non-conforming units and to make it easier to meet the off-street parking requirements (Please refer to the Progress Evaluation section of this Element.)

Zoning does not appear to be a constraint on new development. In fact, because of the high densities permitted in Albany, zoning is actually an incentive to provision of housing. The table on the previous page shows that between 1980-1990, the City has been successful in approving several high density projects at the maximum permitted density.

#### Code Enforcement

Albany instituted a formal code enforcement program during 1991-92. The program provides code enforcement in response to citizen complaints. This approach is consistent with the findings of the 1992 windshield housing condition survey that less than 3% of Albany's housing stock is in need of significant repair.

The City also participates in Alameda County's housing rehabilitation program and a minor home repair program as part of the annual CDBG program.

1991 Development Fee Comparison			
Type of Permit	Albany	El Cerrito	Berkeley
Variance	\$475	\$1,000	\$272 - 540
Use Permit	\$365*	\$1,000	\$270
Design Review	\$80 - 200*	\$750	\$340 - 1,134
Appeal	\$175	50% of Project Fee	\$30 - 313
Environmental Review	\$1,000 + Consultant Cost	Consultant Cost + Administration Fee	\$380 + \$80/hour of staff time related to EIR + Cost of EIR Consultant
Subdivision			
1-3 Lots	\$225	\$400	\$2,005
4 or more	\$315	\$2,000	\$2,060
Lot Line Adjustment	\$210	\$250	\$660
Note: *Major projects charged on a per-hour basis.			
Source: Cities of Albany, El Cerrito, and Berkeley Planning Departments, 1991.			

#### Project Review Procedures and Permit Fees

Albany has one of the quickest development review and processing times of any jurisdiction in the Bay Area. A typical small development takes one to three months from application to approval. This is due to the efficiency

of a small city government, the lack of an application backlog, and the fact that most public facilities are already in place.

At the time the 1985 Housing Element was adopted, Albany's project review and permit fees were among the lowest in the Bay Area. They have been raised since then to bring them in line with those of neighboring communities and are now considered to be average for the area. A table comparing Albany's permit fees with surrounding cities is provided above.

Most of Albany's remaining building sites have all necessary utilities and street improvements in place so these types of improvements are not typically associated with development in Albany. The north end of Madison will need to be extended in the future, and minor street widenings or small utility extensions are sometimes required. In general, provision of streets and utilities has not been an impediment



to housing construction in Albany because the City is nearly built-out.

Albany has enacted a Capital Facilities Fee for long-range, public capital redevelopment projects. The fee is determined by the projected growth and capital facilities needs for the City over a five and ten year period. The fees are based on the number and size of residential units and the actual size of new non-residential construction or expansion. This fee would cost the average new single-family home approximately \$1,300. During 1990, the Albany Unified School District adopted school impact fees for new residential construction and additions of \$1.56 per square foot.

The estimated permit cost for development of a 1,500 square foot single-family home is \$10,915 and \$8,715 for a 1,000 square foot condominium unit in a 10-unit subdivision in Albany based upon the individual permit costs provided in the table below.

1991 Approximate City Permit Costs		
Permit Fee	Single-Family Unit (1,500 Sq. Ft.)	Condominium Unit (1,000 Sq. Ft.)
Cap. Facil.	\$1,300	\$800
School Dist.	2,340	1,870
Design Rev.	200	200
Bldg. Permit	3,750	2,500
Sewer	825	825
Water	2,500	2,500
Subdivision	N/A	20
TOTAL	\$10,915	\$8,715
Source: Albany Planning Dept., 1991.		

#### Property taxes

The effect of Proposition 13, passed in 1978, on property taxes has been substantial in all communities. Property tax rates were once a local option and had some influence on a developer's choice of where to build, as well as on housing costs. Now property taxes are fixed at the 1976 rate with increases limited to 2 percent a year as long as the property does not change ownership (except for voter-approved

increases and pre-1978 voter approved liabilities). When a house is sold, the new purchaser is assessed property taxes based on the current value as indicated by sales price.

The overall effect of Prop. 13 is that two houses of equal market value can be assessed widely different amounts because one has sold since 1978 and the other has not. This not only creates vast inequities in taxes, but also creates significant incentives for people to stay in place, especially if they are living in houses purchased before 1978.

#### Parking Requirements

In 1978, Albany citizens passed Measure D, a voter initiative that required two parking spaces per unit for all new residential units. An exception procedure was also passed that allowed a reduction to 1.5 spaces/unit through a conditional use permit procedure if sufficient on-street parking were found.

This parking requirement, which has been upheld in two subsequent elections, makes it more difficult to develop senior and other affordable housing. For example, senior housing has a much lower parking ratio needed per unit (average 0.8 to 1.3 spaces/unit).

#### Potential Termination of Housing Subsidies

The termination of Federal mortgage and/or rent subsidies to housing developments built by the private sector with these monies is a potential threat to affordable housing throughout the country. Communities with low income housing supported by Federally subsidized mortgages or rents which are faced with termination are required to develop programs in the Housing Element to address the needs of residents who may become displaced. Contact with Alameda County indicates that no such housing exists in Albany and therefore no programs to address termination of housing subsidies are included in the 1990-95 Housing Element.



## **Non-Governmental Constraints On Solutions to Housing Needs**

All construction, whether new or remodel, is affected by financing, labor and materials costs. New housing costs are further affected by land availability, land costs, development costs and developer's profit.

A significant constraint to new housing construction in Albany is the high cost and extremely limited availability of land. The land use map prepared for this General Plan shows eleven scattered vacant parcels east of Albany Hill. Most developable sites are on Albany Hill, an area of high land and development costs due to steep slopes and other environmental constraints. Albany Hill has approximately 20 acres divided into 14 parcels. The north end of Madison has one nine-acre parcel of vacant land.

### Land Costs

Land cost significantly affects the price of housing. Most banks use standard ratios of home value to land value. Thus, they expect a house on a \$30,000 lot to cost 50% more than one on a \$20,000 lot. This practice encourages larger houses with more amenities. Because the developer's profit is usually figured as a percentage of the cost, a larger, more expensive house results in a larger profit and adds further to the sales price.

Since Albany is in an urban area that is mostly-developed, land costs are high. Isolated vacant lots zoned for single-family development sell rarely, perhaps one per year. Single-family lot sale prices in the past few years have ranged from \$30,000 - \$50,000. Based upon information provided by a local realtor, current prices for multi-family zoned land are approximately \$15-20.00 per square foot for a 10,000 square foot site which could yield 8 multi-family units. A larger site would command approximately \$20.00/sq. ft. Sites zoned R-2 are typically smaller, 50,000 sq. ft. and would

be more expensive since smaller projects (4 units could be built on this size lot) can provide more amenities than a high density project. A recent sale of a comparable lot at 420 Kains was approximately \$30,000 per unit or \$26/sq. ft.

### Development Costs

Development costs consist of professional design costs and costs of public improvements such as streets, sidewalks, and utility extensions. They do not include land, construction or financing costs.

Design costs are usually higher in a built-up area. This phenomenon results from a number of factors including:

- 1) Working on smaller parcels with less design flexibility and fewer units to share the design costs;
- 2) Working on more difficult, often steep, parcels with higher soils geotechnical engineering costs and foundation costs;
- 3) Working on parcels where the new development must fit into an existing pattern or scale of development, and
- 4) Working at higher densities, where building safety codes require more expensive types of construction and where parking spaces must be provided in decks or multi-level garages which are more expensive than at-grade parking.

The effect of providing public improvements on development costs is minimal because most sites in Albany already have public streets and utilities.

Other costs of producing housing are labor and materials. Each of these has gone up with inflation, even with the adoption of many lower-cost materials and labor-saving techniques. Factory built housing, while permitted under Albany building and zoning codes, is still the

exception due to the high cost of land relative to the cost of such housing, as previously discussed.

#### Financing

Another common constraint is financing. The high cost of financing significantly affected the housing market in the early 1980s. At present, financing is readily available to qualified purchasers at a rate of 8-9.5%. The Bay Area average rate on a 30-year fixed rate loan as of October 27, 1991 was listed in the San Francisco Examiner/Chronicle at 8.98% for loans above 191,250 and 8.64% for loans below \$191,250.

The effect of differing interest rates is shown by the table below, using as an example a 30-year fixed rate \$200,000 loan. The table below assumes a 20% down-payment and that loan payments would not exceed 35% of gross household income.

<b>Monthly Payment and Income Needed at Various Interest Rates (1990)</b>		
<b>\$200,000 Home Loan</b>		
<b>Loan Rate</b>	<b>Monthly Payment</b>	<b>Needed Income</b>
8%	\$1,468	\$53,382
9%	\$1,610	\$58,545
10%	\$1,756	\$63,855
Source: Loan Amortization Tables		

Financing costs are not only of interest to the homebuyer. They also affect the developer. When construction loans cost 10%, the developer will have to charge more per unit than when the same amount of money can be obtained for 8%. Financing for mixed use commercial-residential projects is difficult to obtain because the banks believe that there is more risk involved with such projects.

Interest rates and financing availability are not within the capability of the City of Albany to determine. These variables are nationally determined based on economic trends and federal monetary policy.

#### Impacts of Constraints on New Housing

Albany's major housing need at present, and for the foreseeable future, is creating more small and affordable rental and ownership units. This need arises from a gradual trend in Albany toward smaller households and the fact that a large percentage of Albany residents have income levels below the County median. These new units could take several forms: second units, single-family dwellings, or multi-family construction.

### **DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Housing development opportunities in Albany are limited to vacant land on Albany Hill, infill development on scattered vacant lots, redevelopment or further development of existing sites. The following table summarizes these opportunities in terms of potential land area and types and number of estimated housing units both from development of vacant land and redevelopment of existing urban uses.

#### **Infill Opportunities**

As indicated in the Table on the following page, there are approximately 11 scattered single-family lots in Albany exclusive of the Albany Hill area. The only obstacle to the development of these lots is the very high cost of the land relative to the size of the unit that can be built on it. Development densities on Albany Hill will be studied further under Plan policies, however, environmental and infrastructure constraints indicate that future residential densities there will not support medium or high density housing. Therefore, the estimated number of potential housing units on Albany Hill vacant land is based upon the minimum permitted Planned Development density of 9 units/acre.

## Potential Sites for Residential Development

Site & Zoning	# Parcels /Acreage	Max. # Units (SF/MF)	# Units w/25% Density Bonus	# BMR Units w/15% Inclusionary Policy
<b>VACANT LANDS</b>				
City-Wide Low Density	11/1.5 AC	11SF	N/A	N/A
Albany Hill Low Density	11/2 AC	11SF	N/A	N/A
Albany Hill West Planned Development (PD)	1/12.5 AC	112SF	N/A	26
Albany Hill East PD	1/4.5 AC	47SF	N/A	9
Albany Hill Lands End PD	1/1 AC	11SF	N/A	2
North End Madison PD	9/1 AC	11SF	N/A	2
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>22.5/AC</b>	<b>203SF</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>REDEVELOPMENT</b>				
Hill Lumber R-3: High Density	4 AC	156MF	N/A	23
Albany Bowl Planned Res./Comm. PRC: High Density	1.5 AC	58MF	14	8
Villa Motel PRC: High Density	0.6 AC	22MF	5	3
Residential Above Commercial High Density	1.8 AC	68MF	N/A	N/A
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>7.9 AC</b>	<b>304MF</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>30 AC</b>	<b>507DU</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>73</b>
Source: Newman Planning Associates, 1992.				



Taken together, the total number of single-family dwelling units that could be built on the vacant lands and infill lots described above is 203.

## **Redevelopment Opportunities**

Redevelopment presents the greatest opportunities for future housing development in Albany both because the location of these areas is conducive to higher density development and because higher density development will yield a greater number, and often more affordable, housing units. The estimated total number of multi-family units that could be built on the identified redevelopment sites is 304.

### Private redevelopment to higher density

In the Commercial Expansion (C-E) Zone along Kains and Adams, commercial development and expansion along San Pablo occurred initially as anticipated when the zone was created 27 years ago. However, significant conversion of residences to commercial expansion uses did not occur and the blocks immediately behind San Pablo remain primarily residential. A 1989 survey showed that three of the 12 blocks within the C-E Zoning District are predominantly commercial and 9 are predominantly residential.

Under the policies of this General Plan, taking into account present use and anticipated development patterns, four of the C-E Zoning District blocks would remain commercial. The remaining blocks have been designated for high density multi-family uses. Between 1985-1990, three multi-family residential projects were built in the C-E zone along the west side of Kains.

A significant obstacle to large, high density development is the prevailing small lot size. Most lots in Albany are 2,500 to 3,750 square feet. The Zoning Ordinance requires a minimum of 5,000 square feet for multi-family development of three or more units. Thus, a potential multi-family developer must acquire at least two lots. Given increasingly high land

prices, this makes land assembly difficult for larger scale development.

### Hill Lumber Company Site

The lumber company closed its business in 1992. This 4-acre site is bordered on three sides by residential uses. The Plan designates this site for medium density, multi-family residential uses, with a potential for 156 units.

### Albany Bowl Site

This 3.8-acre site including the bowling alley and adjacent parcels is now all in one ownership, except for two single-family dwellings facing onto Adams. Most of the site is underused, with large areas of parking and marginal commercial development. The Plan designates this site PRC: mixed housing/commercial use with the potential for approximately 58 multi-family housing units and 69,100 square feet of commercial space.

### Villa Motel Site

The Villa Motel is located on San Pablo Avenue at Albany's southern border and is partially located within the City of Berkeley. The portion of the site within Albany is 1.2 acres. The Motel is in disrepair, although at present provides single-room occupancy housing. The site is designated PRC: mixed housing/commercial use under the Plan. Assuming the site were redeveloped for mixed use in the future, approximately half for high density housing (0.6 acres) and half for commercial use, 22 multi-family units and 24,000 square feet of commercial use could be built.

### Residential uses in commercial areas

Residential uses are permitted above the ground floor on both Solano and San Pablo Avenues. Developers generally do not propose residential uses for these areas because of difficulty in designing and financing mixed use projects.

There are approximately 245 existing residential units located on San Pablo and the commercial

portion of Solano Avenue. The Plan assumes that these residential uses will remain and that the existing 1.76 acres on Solano and San Pablo Avenues presently in single-family uses will be converted to commercial uses on the ground floor with residential uses above, at a density of 39 residential units per acre (approximately 68 units).

A 1987 zoning amendment prohibited conversion of apartment buildings on Solano to other uses, except for ground floor areas facing Solano.

There are very few residential units on San Pablo Avenue. This is probably because the street is much more heavily traveled and noisier than Solano and because many of the uses are auto-oriented or heavy commercial activity, and therefore less attractive to potential residents. Increased development of these areas for discrete residential uses might be difficult because of the noise standards proposed in this Plan and the City goal to revitalize San Pablo Avenue as a major commercial corridor.

#### Waterfront lands

The waterfront property is now occupied by Golden Gate Fields Race Track and related parking areas. The portion of the waterfront area currently owned by the Catellus Corporation consists of 142 acres of land, plus an additional 367 acres of submerged land. The present commercial recreation uses are expected to continue for the duration of this Plan. Therefore, this area does not present opportunities for housing development.

A 1990 voter initiative requires that all material changes to the General Plan or Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the Waterfront be approved by the voters prior to final adoption.

#### University of California Properties

The University of California owns two large properties in Albany. They are adjacent to each other in the area bounded by Buchanan, San

Pablo, the Berkeley City limits (Codornices Creek) and the Southern Pacific railroad tracks.

University Village contains married student housing. This 73-acre site contains 920 units with a population of about 2500 residents. Some of the multi-family buildings date from World War II when the site was military housing. Many of the units were rebuilt in the 1960's.

The University has initiated a comprehensive master plan process to redevelop this site. The southwest portion, which is zoned C/S/LI (Commercial/Service/Light Industrial District) is mostly vacant. Portions of the University Village site, including the San Pablo frontage, could be developed to higher densities and different uses, such as retail commercial.

The Gill Tract is a part of the University's land fronting on San Pablo, Buchanan and Jackson. At present it is used for experimental agricultural purposes. It could be developed residentially, possibly in conjunction with commercial uses on the San Pablo frontage.

Although redevelopment of the San Pablo frontage could be exclusively for residential uses, the City would favor commercial/residential mixed use for several reasons. First, the City has established a goal of revitalizing and strengthening San Pablo Avenue as a major commercial corridor. Establishing commercial uses on that portion of the Avenue would provide more continuity and help to strengthen other businesses in the immediate area.

Second, non-residential development on San Pablo would buffer the University Village units from the adverse impacts of a major commercial and transportation corridor. Third, off-street parking spaces could be shared, since many commercial uses have their highest parking demand in the daytime, while residential parking demand is highest at night.



## **Manufactured Housing**

Manufactured housing, in which portions of the house arrive at the site ready to put in place, offers a lower cost alternative to the conventional "stick-built" process by which most housing in Albany is built today. The most common form of manufactured housing is mobile homes. Although Albany has no restrictions against mobile homes in R-1 zones, there are at present no mobile homes in Albany. They could conceivably be used on legally created small lots, if land costs were lower. Unfortunately, land costs are so high in Albany that manufactured housing is not an attractive alternative to custom stick-built housing construction.

It is possible that a large multi-unit residential development on level land could take advantage of the economies of manufactured housing. For instance, major construction components such as trusses and joists are precut and delivered to a site, thereby saving labor and lumber costs (because there is less waste).

## **Conservation of Affordable Housing**

Conservation of existing affordable housing is an important part of the City's affordable housing strategy and can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Providing low cost loans or grants to home-owners for needed home repairs, such as the County HCD Housing Preservation Programs, can assist lower-income families in staying in presently affordable housing. Reducing the likelihood that existing rental units will be converted to condominiums or other uses also maintains lower cost housing opportunities.

In 1988, the City adopted a new Zoning regulation that prohibits the conversion of more than three residential units located above commercial uses in commercial districts to other uses. Condominium conversions are also restricted under the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The City will maintain these Zoning provisions to conserve existing affordable housing.

## **RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Increased residential energy efficiency can reduce monthly utility costs and thereby improve the affordability of a given residence. New housing must meet the Title 24 energy efficiency requirements which go a long way toward minimizing energy use for household heating. Existing housing, particularly older homes which predominate in Albany, may be poorly insulated and therefore more costly to heat. The Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) provides weatherization for existing housing (housing insulation and water heater blankets) through its Housing Preservation Programs. These programs provide low interest loans and small grants to qualified home owners in need of minor and major home repairs. When an applicant is qualified, the HCD makes an inspection of the home for the types of repairs needed and always evaluates energy efficiency needs. In 1991, 24 grants and loans were made to Albany households for a variety of home repairs. These types of programs will continue under HCD. In 1993, a pilot program will be conducted under contract with PG&E to weatherize 2,000 homes countywide. Eligible families will receive weatherization services from PG&E. Albany residents will be informed of this weatherization opportunity through the City's new program to provide public information on housing-related programs.

## **PROGRESS EVALUATION**

Albany is required to evaluate the progress made toward achieving current Housing Element goals. In general, the 1985 Housing Element goals and programs to conserve and improve existing housing, and particularly



rental housing, have been achieved. Continued participation by Albany residents in Alameda County housing rehabilitation programs accommodated approximately 200 low-income households. Conversion of rental housing in commercial zones was prohibited through revisions to the Zoning Ordinance.

New affordable housing goals were only partially successful. Between 1989-90, a program to legalize secondary dwelling units succeeded in yielding 103 units which were upgraded to meet minimum building safety standards. Parking requirements and lot size requirements, both constraints to secondary dwelling unit development, were relaxed. Between 1988-1991, eight new second units were approved and six were built.

The following section contains a summary of the City's actions from 1985 through July, 1991.

The 1985 Albany Housing Element had as its goal "A decent home and suitable living environment for all Albany residents (present and future) of all economic levels." The policies and programs under this goal were grouped into three major categories:

- 1) Preservation and maintenance of the existing housing stock.
- 2) Provision of an adequate supply of rental housing.
- 3) Encouragement of new construction to meet housing needs.

The progress on policies and programs within each of these categories is described below:

1. *Preserve and maintain the existing housing stock.*

- A. **Continue the Housing Conservation Program and Minor Home Repair Programs for homeowners and the Low-interest Loan Rehabilitation program for rental units.**

**Progress:**

All of the programs mentioned above are administered by Alameda County, using either County or Federal funds. The continued availability of these programs is dependent on funding sources outside of Albany's direct control.

Under the CDBG (Community Development Block Program), a range of \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year is allocated to the Albany Housing Conservation Program. This funding assists from 2-6 low income homeowners per year for rehabilitation projects. This level has not changed since the 1985 Housing Element was adopted.

The Minor Home Repair Program, initiated by the County Department of Housing and Community Development in 1985, is continuing to assist low income homeowners with health and safety repairs. This program assists about 35 units per year in Albany through a maximum grant of \$3,000 per unit.

Both CDBG funds and funds from a Federal Rental Rehabilitation Program are made available through Alameda County to landlords who keep rents at low income levels. These funds are available on an as-needed basis. Three to five units per year are served by these programs in Albany.

**B. Encourage maintenance of existing housing, especially rental housing.**

**Progress:**

Albany still has no general housing inspection program. During Fiscal Year 1991-92, the Albany Fire Department established a fire safety inspection program for residential properties containing three or more units. This program is limited to fire safety items such as smoke detectors, removing combustible items and other general safety items. The general physical condition of the units are not evaluated.

The 1985 Housing Element stated that although "the City should establish an inspection program for rental units," because the housing stock did not appear to be deteriorating significantly, enforcement of housing codes would be continued only on a complaint basis. The 1990 Housing Condition Windshield Survey confirmed that housing condition in Albany does not warrant an active code enforcement program. This continues to be Albany's policy.

**2. *Maintain an adequate supply of rental housing.***

**A. Restrict condominium conversions.**

**Progress:**

No new City policies or ordinances were adopted concerning condominium conversions. The only condominium conversion application submitted and processed was for 235 units at the Bayside Commons residential complex. This situation was not a direct conversion because the project had originally been approved for condominiums in 1985. The owners let the subdivision map expire and no other applications have been received. This lack of applications may be more the result of a soft condominium market rather than the City's policy to restrict them.

**B. Encourage construction of new rental housing.**

**Progress:**

The major problem with provision of new rental housing in Albany is the lack of land and the high price of the little land available. There are new construction funds available through the County for pre-construction costs of new rental housing. None of these funds have been used to date in Albany. This funding is also available to non-profit groups for the purchase and rehabilitation of housing for low income households. Again, none have been used so far in Albany. Between 1985-1990, 53 new rental units were constructed in Albany.

**C. Restrict conversion of rental housing units to other uses.**

**Progress:**

The 1985 Housing Element said that public hearings would be held in 1985 to consider changes in the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit conversion of residential units to commercial uses in areas zoned for commercial and "commercial-expansion."

These hearings were held in 1986 and 1988 and the Zoning Ordinance was changed to prohibit conversion of residential units to commercial uses in both the local commercial (C-1) and highway commercial (C-2) districts. No changes were made to commercial-expansion

the project fronts on San Pablo Avenue.

**D. Provide rental subsidies for low-income renters.**

**Progress:**

The Alameda County Housing Authority was subsidizing 17 Section 8 units in Albany at the time the 1985 Housing Element was adopted. There are now 20 such units with a waiting list of 25 Albany residents.

The Section 8 Rental Subsidy Program is the only one available. Obtaining additional funds for more subsidized units is difficult because rents in Albany are generally higher than Section 8 authorized rents. The Section 8 Program also has been severely cutback during the last five years by the Federal Government.

**3. *Allow and encourage the construction of new housing units sufficient to meet Albany's share of future regional growth.***

**A. Eliminate, where feasible, constraints on new housing construction.**

**Progress:**

The 1985 Housing Element indicated the City would hold hearings to reconsider the current parking requirement of two parking places per unit, which was seen as a potential obstacle to create new multiple-family units.

During 1990-91, public hearings were held to consider revising the parking ordinance. A revised ordinance was adopted, clarifying exception provisions and allowing required parking spaces to be located in the front and side yards under certain circumstances. Smaller parking spaces were also permitted under certain circumstances. The two space per unit requirement for all new units was not changed.

The 1985 Housing Element also included a recommendation to seek funds for public improvements related to new developments through establishment of assessment districts and issuance of tax-free municipal bonds. Neither of these programs has been implemented and are not now being considered. Further, the City did not hold hearings in 1985, as recommended in the 1985 Element, on revision of the existing charter position on revenue bonds. However, lower interest rates have eliminated the need for this approach.

**B. Encourage second units for lower-income renters in single-family areas.**

**Progress:**

The City's second unit ordinance was revised in 1989 and 1990 to further encourage second units as a workable means to create affordable housing. These revisions reduced the minimum lot size from 4,000 to 3,750 sq. ft. and incorporated more flexible parking requirements based on the age of the original housing unit.

In addition, a second unit legalization program was completed during 1989-90. This effort resulted in 103 units being upgraded to meet minimum housing code requirements (some of these units were in the R-2 and R-3, Multi-family district.) Only two applications were denied and two more units required abatement actions due to serious health and safety violations.

During 1988-91, eight second unit applications were approved and six units built. One unit was under construction in 1992.

**C. Encourage residential units in commercial areas.**

**Progress:**

In 1987-88, the Zoning Ordinance was amended to permit R-3 residential density in the upper stories of commercial developments, subject to certain parking and performance standard requirements. This change applies to both commercial and commercial-expansion zones.

In 1988, the City established a broader range of permitted and conditional uses within the light industrial district. The district, renamed Commercial/Service/Light Industrial (C/S/LI) conditionally permits live-work spaces.



**D. Encourage higher density residential development of under-utilized University of California property away from the San Pablo-Buchanan frontage.**

**Progress:**

The 1985 Housing Element suggested that the City encourage the University to develop land presently used for agricultural research and open space with high density residential use and commercial uses on the San Pablo-Buchanan frontage. The University is undertaking a comprehensive master plan process to redevelop this site.

**E. Encourage the construction of housing for low-income senior citizens.**

**Progress:**

Since state and federal funding for these programs has virtually ended, developing such housing is left to non-profit organizations. Assistance is available through Alameda County to non-profits for purchase and rehabilitation of existing units. Pre-construction assistance is available to developers for new low-income housing construction. (See Policy 2.B discussion, above). However, no new housing has been made available in Albany under these two programs.

One of the major constraints to new senior housing has been the two-space-per-unit parking requirement. Senior housing uses a much lower standard of 0.3 to 0.5 spaces/unit (See Policy 3.B discussion above.)

**4. *Ensure that housing is available to all citizens, regardless of race, sex, age, or religion, in accordance with state and federal laws.***

**Progress:**

Operation Sentinel, a non-profit agency is under contract to Alameda County to provide fair

housing counseling and monitoring in Albany. Between one and five complaints a year are received concerning fair housing in Albany. Although race, sex and religion do not appear to be wide-spread issues in Albany housing availability, there have been some complaints regarding discrimination by age and families with children.

**5. *Ask that other cities and counties also provide housing to equal the jobs created by new development in those cities and counties.***

**Progress:**

This remains a significant issue throughout the Bay Area as development of suburban employment centers increase. In some areas, such as along major freeway corridors, jobs are growing much faster than the number of housing units.

The City considered this issue as part of their review of the Catellus Corporation's proposed Albany Waterfront development during 1987-90. A jobs/housing balance impact section was incorporated into the Final Environmental Impact Report for the proposal.

**HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS (1990-95)**

The 1990-95 Housing Element contains expanded goals and more numerous programs to encourage development of affordable housing consistent with the ABAG identified affordable housing needs for Albany during this time period. An Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance is recommended to be implemented requiring 15% of units in projects with 10 or more units be affordable to low-to-moderate income households or payment of an in lieu fee. New areas have been designated for redevelopment to mixed high density residential and commercial use on San Pablo Avenue. These areas could yield approximately 80 units of multi-family housing. Inclusionary units for these sites could

yield approximately 11 units of low-income housing.

The most likely site to redevelop during the 1990-95 portion of the Housing Element Program period is the Hill Lumber site. The property went up for sale in 1991 and the lumber business subsequently closed, making way for future housing development. The number of potential housing units has been estimated based upon the total four-acre site area and an average density for the High Density zoning category of 39 units/acre. This calculation yields 156 multi-family units. However, the permitted density range of 17-63 units indicates that the actual development could be substantially smaller or larger. A 15% Inclusionary requirement for a 156-unit project would be 23 units of housing affordable to low-income households. In addition, the City's participation in the County Mortgage Credit Certificate Program could provide 16 or more certificates to moderate income first-time-buying households purchasing units at the future Hill Lumber site project. Thus, approximately 16 units of moderate income housing could be created at this site.

Additional opportunities to create new affordable housing units exist through development of new second units and residential units above commercial uses on Solano Avenue. The Housing Element Program anticipates that 12 new second units and 5 units above commercial uses could be built between 1991-95. The estimate for second units is based upon trends between 1989-91 when eight second units were approved and six constructed. The City anticipates that implementation of Program 2.1.5, the Housing Opportunities Public Information Campaign, in conjunction with the permitted high multi-family densities in commercial zones will result in development of five units above commercial uses by 1995.

Based on these programs and housing development opportunities, the 1990-95

Housing Element Program anticipates that Albany will significantly exceed its total identified housing need and exceed the total ABAG identified very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing need. The table below summarizes these Housing Program estimates.

The following goals, policies and programs, in addition to those relating to housing in other elements, constitute an action program to implement the objectives outlined in this element. Each policy has one or more specific actions, or programs, that include the following implementation information:

<b>Program:</b>	a concise statement of which action will be taken;
<b>Responsible Agency:</b>	the City department or other agency responsible for carrying out the program;
<b>Time Period:</b>	a proposed target date for completion;
<b>Target:</b>	quantified objectives, where applicable.

**Goal HE 1: Preserve, maintain and improve Albany's existing housing stock.**

#### **Policies and Programs:**

**Policy HE 1.1:** *Continue to participate in housing rehabilitation programs and pursue other funding to rehabilitate older housing and, where feasible, to retain a supply of low- and moderate-income housing units. Existing affordable housing in Albany should be conserved. Albany's affordable housing includes the 920 student housing units in the U.C. Albany Village, 103 existing legal second units, the 245 units in the commercial area on Solano and San Pablo Avenues, and the estimated 1,226 units in apartment buildings with more than 10 units. It should be noted that*

## Proportion of Albany's 1988 - 1995 Housing Need Expected To Be Met Through Housing Element Programs

### Very Low Income

ABAG Identified Need	23 Units
Units Built or Approved 1988-90	3
Estimated New Units 1991-95	
• Second Units	6
• Inclusionary — Hill Lumber	14
Total Units 1988-95	23
Percent of 1988-95 ABAG Identified Need	100%

### Low Income

ABAG Identified Need	15
Units Built or Approved 1988-90	3
Estimated New Units 1991-95	
• Second Units	6
• Residential Above Commercial	2
• Inclusionary — Hill Lumber	9
Total Units 1988-95	20
Percent of 1988-95 ABAG Identified Need	133%

### Moderate Income

ABAG Identified Need	18
Units Built or Approved 1988-90	0
Estimated New Units 1991-95	
• Mortgage Credit Certificate — Hill Lumber	16
• Residential Above Commercial	3
Total Units 1988-95	19
Percent of 1988-95 ABAG Identified Need	105%

### Above Moderate

ABAG Identified Need	30
Units Built or Approved 1988-90	12
Estimated New Units 1991-95	
• Hill Lumber	117
• Other Infill Development	12
Total Units 1988-1995	141
Percent of ABAG Identified Need	470%

### Total Units

ABAG Identified Need 1988 - 1995	86
Units Built or Approved 1988-90	18
Estimated New Units 1991-95	185
Total Estimated New Units 1988-95	203
Percent of 1988-95 Housing Need	236%



*some of the 245 units on Solano Avenue are in apartment buildings of 10 or more units.*

**Program HE 1.1:** Continue to work with the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department for the housing rehabilitation program and the minor home repair program.

**Responsible Agency:** Alameda County HCD and the City  
**Time Period:** Ongoing, or as CDBG funding remains available  
**Funding Source:** CDBG funds  
**Target:** 5-8 Rehabilitated units per year

**Policy HE 1.2:** *Continue to limit conversion of existing multi-family residential units to condominiums. Limited equity cooperatives and other innovative housing proposals which are affordable to low and moderate income households are encouraged.*

**Program HE 1.2.:** Amend the condominium conversion ordinance to allow limited equity cooperatives.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1992-93 FY  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Policy HE 1.3** *Strengthen programs to upgrade and maintain a safe and sound housing stock.*

**Program HE 1.3.1:** Maintain building and housing code enforcement programs and follow-up on housing code and other safety violations.

**Responsible Agency:** City Building and Planning Departments  
**Time Period:** Ongoing  
**Funding:** Revenues from building permits and code enforcement surcharge.

**Program HE 1.3.2:** Expand the current Fire Department rental unit fire code program to include other primary health and safety problems.

**Responsible Agency:** City Fire and Building Departments  
**Time Period:** 1992-93 Fiscal Year  
**Funding:** Rental Unit Inspection Charge and Apartment License Tax  
**Target:** All rental units inspected within a two-year time frame.

**Policy HE 1.4:** *Encourage construction of new rental housing.*

**Program HE 1.4:** Develop a public information program to inform the public and development community regarding availability of County and other agency funding for construction of rental housing.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department and County HCD  
**Time Period:** 1992-93  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Goal HE 2:** Provide a variety of housing types, densities, designs and prices which will meet the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community while maintaining and enhancing the character of existing development.

#### **Policies and Programs:**

**Policy HE 2.1:** *Encourage the construction of housing affordable to very low-, low- and moderate-income households consistent with the regional fair share goals and income levels of current and future Albany residents.*

**Program HE 2.1.1:** Develop and provide a program of incentives such as reduced development fees, assistance with public improvements, priority in permit processing to encourage the development of very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1992-93 Fiscal Year  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Program HE 2.1.2:** Develop and provide a program requiring inclusionary housing for proposed developments of ten or more units. The inclusionary housing program should require 15% of proposed units to be made affordable to low-income households. This program will be appropriate for mixed commercial/high-density housing redevelopment projects in the PRC district.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1992-93  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget  
**Target:** 15% of residential units at Hill Lumber and Albany Bowl sites.

**Program HE 2.1.3:** Enact a density bonus ordinance consistent with State law requirements.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Frame:** 1992-93  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Program HE 2.1.4:** Reestablish the City's financial commitment to participate in the County HCD Mortgage Credit Certificate program during 1992-93. This will enable certificates to be allocated to moderate-income first-time home buyers for the Hill Lumber redevelopment project. Continue the City's involvement in the future as appropriate to

obtain certificates for housing redevelopment projects.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Frame:** 1992-93  
**Funding:** General Fund and/or Developer contribution  
**Target:** 10% of Hill Lumber redevelopment project units.

**Program HE 2.1.5:** Develop a Housing Opportunities Public Information Campaign to disseminate information to Albany residents and business and commercial property owners about a variety of housing programs and opportunities. Typical Campaign actions would include publication and distribution of flyers, posters placed on kiosks and public places, information in the Albany Newsette, among other ideas. The following types of housing needs and programs should be incorporated into the Public Information Campaign in addition to others identified as appropriate by the Planning Director:

- 1) Encourage development of rental units in commercial districts through an active marketing program for commercial property owners;
- 2) Provide information about existing City policy to encourage development of new second units;
- 3) Increase public awareness about County HCD Housing Preservation Programs and the pilot weatherization program with PG&E during 1993 as well as Operation Sentinel;
- 4) Inform the development community about the new Inclusionary housing program and opportunities for increased density through Density bonuses;

- 5) Inform the public about the Mortgage Credit Certificate Program which assists first-time homebuyers;
- 6) Survey and publicize a list of housing units that meet the needs of disabled persons.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1993-94  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Program HE 2.1.6:** Sponsor a ballot measure to revise the two space/unit residential parking requirement established by Measure D (1978). This revision will recommend more proportional ways to calculate parking requirements (e.g., based upon unit size, number of bedrooms, unit type and the population served, such as special exemptions for senior housing, proximity to transit, or available land for parking in the immediate neighborhood).

**Responsible Agency:** City Council  
**Time Period:** Next general election within Fiscal Year 1993-94 or special election as scheduled  
**Funding:** General Fund

**Policy HE 2.2:** *Review zoning densities and development standards on Albany Hill to protect the character and natural qualities of The Hill and strengthen environmental protection.*

**Program HE 2.2:** Review and revise the Albany Hill Specific Plan with particular emphasis on permitted densities, hillside development standards, and reducing environmental impacts.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1993-94 Fiscal Year  
**Funding:** Planning Budget and/or establishing a reimbursement fund from all potential development per Government Code Section 65451.

**Policy HE 2.3:** *Revise the C-E District boundaries to reduce the potential conversion of residential units for commercial use.*

**Program HE 2.3:** Delete the C-E Zoning District designation from the eight blocks along Kains and Adams streets which are predominately in residential use. The zoning designation for these blocks shall be R-3.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1992-93  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Policy HE 2.4:** *Encourage development of secondary dwelling units, balancing the need for increased affordable housing with the need to provide parking and protection of existing neighborhood character.*

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** Ongoing  
**Target:** 12 new second units (1991-1995)



**Policy HE 2.5:** *Encourage development of rental housing above commercial development along Solano Avenue.*

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** Ongoing  
**Target:** 5 units (1991-1995)

**GOAL HE 3:** Expand housing opportunities for the elderly, the disabled, the homeless, and other persons with special housing needs.

**Program HE 3.1:** Participate in and support Alameda County and State-wide efforts to increase the available funding for senior housing projects.

**Responsible Agency:** City Council  
**Time Period:** Ongoing

**Program HE 3.2.1:** Revise the Zoning Ordinance to require a percentage of new units in multi-family or townhouse projects be accessible to disabled residents, consistent with State and Federal requirements, particularly the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Program HE 3.2.2:** Perform a survey of housing units in Albany and publish a list of all units that meet disabled access requirements. Dissemination of this information to the community will be coordinated through the Housing Opportunities Public Information Campaign as noted in Program 2.1.5.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1993-94 Fiscal Year  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Policy HE 3.3:** *Review the Zoning Ordinance so that emergency and transitional housing is permitted within the multi-family and commercial districts as an explicit use.*

**Program HE 3.3:** Revise the Zoning Ordinance so that emergency and transitional housing is permitted within the multi-family and commercial districts. If required, develop specific criteria and standards for such uses.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** 1992-93 Fiscal Year  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Goal HE 4:** Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of age, race, marital status, ancestry, family status (presence of children), disability, national origin, or color.

#### **Policies and Programs:**

**Program HE 4.1:** Continue to participate in Operation Sentinel through the Alameda County Department of Housing and Community Development. Publicize these services in the quarterly Albany Newsette and on leaflets at City Hall, the Albany Library, the Albany Senior Center and other important social centers in the City.

**Responsible Agency:** Planning Department  
**Time Period:** Establish public information program in 1993  
**Funding:** Planning Department Budget

**Policy HE 4.2:** *Continue to support landlord-tenant dispute resolution and housing counseling services provided by organizations such as Operation Sentinel.*

**Program 4.2:** Same as public information program under Program 4.1.



0 400 ft. 1200 ft.



Source: Newman Planning Associates, San Rafael, CA, 1992.  
Graphics: Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., Berkeley, CA

San Francisco Bay

Buchanan St.

Golden Gate Fields Race Track

Hwy. 80  
Eastshore Fwy.

Southern Pacific Railway

USDA







Middle School

University Village

Harrison St.



# HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

-  Town Centre (9 dwelling units)
-  Villa Motel Site (22 dwelling units)
-  Hill Lumber Site (156 dwelling units)
-  Albany Bowl Site (58 dwelling units)
-  Albany Hill (171 dwelling units)
-  Other Vacant Residential Land (11 dwelling units)

CITY OF ALBANY

## Housing Opportunities

1990 - 2010









# CONSERVATION, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Element describes Albany's natural environment, providing information on soils, water, climate, air quality, vegetation, wildlife, and local archaeological resources. Important natural areas in Albany should be protected and restored. Albany Hill, the Albany Waterfront, and Albany's creeks have been recognized as resources for conservation in the Plan. A discussion of each of these resources is found in this Element.

This Element also includes an outline of the City's park and recreation facilities and programs. The City's park landscapes vary from open and natural at Creekside Park to an urban tot lot. Future park development opportunities exist at the Albany Waterfront. Recreational programs are also wide-ranging, providing social services for seniors, sports activities for all ages, and child care for youngsters. The need for additional facilities to meet the demand for these programs will in part be met by the new Community Center and Library on Marin Avenue. The Plan contains policies supporting increased public access to all existing and future private and public recreational facilities. Increased public access refers to access for all age groups and mobility levels.

## ALBANY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### Geology

Albany is on the eastern margin of San Francisco Bay in the central part of the Coast Ranges near the boundary between the oceanic crust of the Pacific plate and the continental crust of the North American plate. These two crustal plates are sliding past each other at the relative rate of 5.5 to 6 centimeters a year.

Two major lines of geologic movement in the San Francisco Bay Area have been identified as the San Andreas Fault and the Hayward Fault. Albany lies between these two fault lines, although it is closer to the Hayward Fault, which is approximately one mile to the east. The San Andreas Fault lies approximately 17 miles to the west.

This location between two faults has significant impacts on planning for Albany. For further discussion of seismic impacts and public safety issues facing the City, please refer to the Community Health and Safety Element.

Albany is underlain by Franciscan bedrock which shows outcroppings at Fleming Point and Albany Hill. This bedrock is overlain by unconsolidated sedimentary units of varying age and, in many places, by artificial fill. Geologic contacts between these unconsolidated deposits have been obscured by development in most of Albany, which makes exact mapping of them difficult.

Two small landslides have been mapped within Albany, both located on the northeastern flank of Albany Hill. Numerous small recent fills are also present on the south and east sides of Albany Hill and on steeper slopes in the eastern part of Albany.

The predominant soil type in Albany is Mills-holm silt loam, characterized by low plasticity,



medium to rapid runoff, medium to high permeability and a low shrink-swell potential. This is found on all the upland slopes. Four other soils are distributed across the remainder of the developed portion of Albany. These soils are characterized by medium to high plasticity, medium to slow runoff, slow permeability, and a medium to high shrink-swell potential.

Much of the Albany Waterfront area has been created by fill of several different types. Most of the native soil in this area has either been covered by this artificial fill or was removed during the construction of Golden Gate Fields Race Track. In the 1930's and 1940's, fill composed of relatively uniform silty clay and clayey silt was deposited on the area of the racetrack and its adjacent parking lots. Later, from the late 1950's to the early 1980's, heterogeneous landfill, composed of construction debris and concrete rubble, was placed to the north and northwest of the parking area. These areas of newer fill are known as the plateau, the neck and the bulb.

Interstates 80 and 580, as well as the Albany (Buchanan Street) interchange, are all constructed on engineered fill which is underlain by alluvium and/or Bay mud.

### **Hydrology, Water Quality, and Erosion**

Albany is part of the Berkeley Hills watershed. Water from these hills flows to the Bay via Cerrito and Codornices Creeks which form the northern and southern boundaries, respectively, of the City.

State and Federal regulations governing water quality differentiate between "point" and "non-point" source discharges. Point source discharges are those from a pipe directly into the Bay. An example would be the effluent from the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) Point Isabel Treatment Plant located just north of Albany. Nonpoint discharge refers

to the general runoff from stormwaters passing across both developed and undeveloped land into drainageways and ultimately into the Bay. The two Albany creeks and the Buchanan Street storm drain collect this nonpoint source runoff in Albany and discharge it into the Bay. The agency responsible for regulating both point and nonpoint discharges in the Bay is the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (SFRWQCB).

There are no known point sources of water pollution in Albany, for example, discharge from manufacturing or industrial sites. However, San Francisco Bay receives both surface and ground water runoff from Albany via Cerrito and Codornices creeks and the Buchanan Street storm drain. Further, wet weather overflow is discharged into the Bay from the Point Isabel Sewage Treatment Plant.

During 1986, EBMUD completed studies of water quality in the Bay and of waters flowing into it from the Albany waterfront. This analysis showed that urban runoff contributes far greater pollutant loads than those from sewage overflow from Point Isabel.

The major mechanism at present for control of urban runoff is erosion control ordinances for new construction. These ordinances are fairly successful in controlling runoff at construction sites but do nothing to control runoff from already developed areas.

Erosion is the wearing away of surface soils by the movement of wind, water and ice. This wearing away can be the result of natural forces or the result of human activities such as road building, construction and footpaths. Particles of nutrient-rich topsoil are carried by rain or runoff downslope into storm drains and stream channels. The resulting water quality problems include sediment buildup, with possible blocking of drainageways or channels; as well as turbidity, algae growth and oxygen depletion.

In Albany, the slopes most subject to erosion are the creekbeds and Albany Hill. The City of Albany attaches conditions to grading and building permits to reduce or eliminate erosion potential. These conditions require that developers primarily restrict grading to dry months, revegetate exposed slopes, and use barriers or sedimentation basins during construction. Site inspections during construction assure compliance with these conditions. These measures however, do not control runoff from existing development. It is this runoff which new regulations will need to address.

As point source dischargers bring their effluent into compliance with water quality regulations, nonpoint sources are constituting a larger percentage of the actual pollutant load going into the Bay. Therefore, the interest of regulators is increasingly aimed at these nonpoint sources, often referred to as "urban runoff." This urban runoff typically contains not only various solids and debris, but also coliforms from wild and domesticated animals, petroleum products and heavy metals such as lead, zinc, cadmium, chrome from streets and highways; nitrogen; phosphorus; asbestos; cyanide and pesticides. SFRWQCB is presently overseeing an intergovernmental study of urban runoff in Alameda County. Albany is a participant in this Alameda County study.

The final report of the Alameda County study will include data on pollutant loads measured and a methodology for estimating future loads. Also to be included are an evaluation of current control measures and proposals for future control mechanisms. Future regulations will be developed from these studies. The ultimate goal is development of a regional toxicity control program to be implemented through a series of Stormwater Management Plans. There is no specific deadline as yet for the preparation of these management plans, which could be established on a municipal, county, or region-wide basis.

## Climate & Air Quality

Albany experiences a temperate Mediterranean climate characterized by relatively large temperature variations between daytime and nighttime. The presence of San Francisco Bay has a moderating influence on temperatures in Albany. The average low temperature is 51 degrees, and the average high temperature is 64 degrees. As in much of the Bay area, the warmest month is September, because this is the month when the winds and fog through the Golden Gate subside.

The potential for development of high air pollution concentrations in a given area depends upon the quantity of pollutants emitted in the surrounding area and the ability of the atmosphere to disperse them. Although there is no air quality monitoring station in Albany, there are several stations in the East Bay from which a general picture of Albany's air quality may be inferred.

Carbon monoxide pollution potential is greatest during the fall and winter months when winds are lightest, less than five miles per hour, and inversion heights are lower. Ozone problems are more common in the summer months.

Albany has no major point sources of air pollution and is not significantly close to any of the major point sources in the Bay area. Albany also benefits from the cleansing effects of winds coming through the Golden Gate. Therefore, air quality in Albany is generally good.

The greatest source of pollutants in Albany is carbon monoxide from traffic on I-80 and I-580. Of the three stations in Richmond that monitor carbon monoxide (CO), the one at Plaza Circle Park is very close to I-80 and I-580. Reports for this station in 1983 and 1987 indicated CO levels well below the 1-hour and 8-hour California standard. (The California standard is stricter than the Federal standard for 8-hour concentrations.) Furthermore, the



concentrations of CO measured showed a decline between 1983 and 1987. This decline is due to the strict enforcement of California's motor vehicle Smog Check program, which went into effect in 1984. Thus, carbon monoxide levels in Albany do not appear to pose a pollution hazard, although there could be local "hot spots" not identified by the monitoring station.

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) have developed a Clean Air Program (CAP). This report, published in draft during 1991, specifies how the Bay Area region will meet State clean air laws. In particular, the recommended actions focus on reducing the carbon monoxide and ozone levels. Measures considered in the plan fall into three categories: industrial uses, mobile sources and transportation control measures. A complete list of these measures is contained in the Appendix of this Plan.

## **Vegetation & Wildlife**

Albany's creek courses, the Waterfront area, and Albany Hill offer the only significant natural open areas for vegetation and wildlife. Many native grasses from coastal California are still found on Albany Hill. The Oak woodland on the Hill's north and east slopes are considered unique in the Berkeley Hills for its varied range of ages, the oldest being over 200 years. Large, mature stands of imported eucalyptus trees are also present on the hill. These trees serve as a winter roosting site for the Monarch butterfly. Other understory shrubs include California blackberry, poison oak, toyon and wild rose.

Vegetation along the creeks includes willows, buckeyes, bay, eucalyptus, and redwood trees. The understory of this vegetation provides habitat. Habitat is also provided for small mammals along the open portion of the creeks. The creeks support a fish population including

sculpin, three-spined stickleback, and mosquito fish.

The Waterfront area, especially the mudflat and marsh areas, constitutes an important vegetation and wildlife resource. Even though the vegetation is limited and has been severely disturbed, these areas support a variety of terrestrial and aquatic animal species, especially during winter and migration periods. Shorebirds common to the Bay are all found along the Albany Waterfront: terns, gulls, cormorants, and saltwater ducks. Birds of prey including Great horned owls, Coopers hawks, and Red-tailed hawks are known to roost on Albany Hill and forage in the mudflats.

Other wildlife in Albany includes animals often found in urbanized areas: raccoons, possums, deer, and skunks.

Much of the vegetation in Albany is urban landscaping such as private yards, parks, and playgrounds. Street trees, typical of most urban landscapes, are not prevalent in Albany. Urban landscaping, in addition to its aesthetic value, affects microclimates by offering shade from the sun and decreases urban runoff by allowing water to percolate into the soil. This vegetation provides habitat for songbirds, insects, amphibians, and some small mammals.

## **Archeological Resources**

The area known as Albany was first inhabited by Ohlone Indians. These Indians camped or settled at or near former or existing marshes, former Bay margins, and at the base of foothills, particularly along seasonal or perennial watercourses. Four prehistoric archeological sites have been identified by the California Archeological Inventory in surveyed portions of Albany, primarily in the Albany Hill area.

While there is no record of any historic archeological sites in Albany, the house at 1124



Talbot Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Albany's Creeks**

Albany's northern and southern limits are defined by Cerrito and Codornices Creeks. A third creek, Village Creek flows through University Village in Albany. At least two other creeks historically flowed through Albany, but were diverted entirely into culverts as the City developed.

Codornices, Cerrito and Village Creeks originate from springs in the East Bay Hills. Until the early twentieth century, Cerrito Creek was essentially in its natural state, flowing past farms. However, with the rapid urban development of the East Bay in the 1900s, Cerrito Creek began to suffer the fate of many urban streams. It has been bridged, channelized, and diverted into culverts in many places. By 1977, only one sizeable area of the creek in the Berkeley Hills remained in a near natural state. Other portions, including virtually the entire length of the creek in Albany, have been altered in one way or another.

Codornices (Spanish for "quail") Creek has not been so markedly altered as Cerrito Creek and is mostly open through the length of the City. Portions have been diverted into culverts, primarily under City streets, but much of the stream is marked by thick native and exotic vegetation.

Village Creek lies within University Village. It flows out of a culvert under San Pablo Avenue through the U.C. Berkeley Gill Tract land, and is within a culvert again under the Village until it reaches Dowling Park. From there the creek flows under the railroad tracks. Village Creek and Codornices Creek merge along the east edge of Golden Gate Fields and then flow north through the mudflats to the bay.

Urban runoff presents the greatest danger to the health of the creeks. Problems of contamination from sewage overflows and other inadvertent deposits of waste occasionally occur. These problems can result in the algal blooms which occur during the warmer months of the year.

The City of Albany is responsible for the inspection of Cerrito Creek from San Pablo Avenue west to the Bay; the City of El Cerrito is responsible for inspecting areas lying east of San Pablo Avenue. Codornices Creek is inspected by the City of Albany from San Pablo Avenue west to the Bay; and by the City of Berkeley for that portion of the creek east of San Pablo Avenue. The City of Albany performs bi-annual creek inspections for overall maintenance and improvements, and acts as the lead agency in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers and the State Department of Fish and Game to perform any work which is necessary. If periodic inspections determine that debris removal is necessary, private property owners are notified and are required to perform this work.

Public access to Codornices Creek is possible at Tevlin Street on the City of Albany/Berkeley border. Cerrito Creek can be accessed at the City of Albany/El Cerrito border adjacent to the Bayside Commons residential complex. A public access pathway along Cerrito Creek has been established but not yet dedicated to the City as part of this development.

The Albany Creek Restoration Program was adopted by the City Council in 1977 and resulted in a series of zoning amendments for protecting and preserving the creeks. Recommendations for further preservation, planting, and education programs require further work. The Codornices Creek Association and the Urban Creeks Council are both working toward further restoration and enhancement of the creeks.

The Albany Zoning Ordinance contains a Watercourse Combining (WC) Zoning District which applies to areas within 75 feet of the centerline of each creek, and areas designated on the Flood Insurance Rate Map as a Special Flood Hazard Zone. The Zoning Ordinance requires that no structures be built within 20 feet of the natural creek bank. However, this setback requirement may be decreased with a Conditional Use Permit. The Zoning Ordinance requires the Planning Commission to consider creek preservation and restoration when reviewing proposed development adjacent to the creeks. Any change to the land must follow flood damage prevention requirements and special geotechnical, drainage and erosion control measures as outlined by the Planning Department.

## **The Albany Waterfront**

The natural resources of the Waterfront Area include its visual aesthetics, both in terms of its scenic natural open areas and beaches, and as a point from which to view the spectacular surrounding scenery of the Bay, San Francisco, the Berkeley Hills, and Marin. The Waterfront Area may also provide future opportunities to develop open space, parks, and other recreation resources consistent with the Waterfront District (WF) zoning designation.

### Aesthetics

The Waterfront Area is generally visible from near and moderate distances to the north, east, and south. Primary views of the site are from the freeways, Golden Gate Fields, and from Albany Hill with distant views from the Berkeley Hills, the Richmond area, Angel Island, Marin County, the Golden Gate, San Francisco, and the Bay Bridge. Any future development of the Waterfront will have regional significance for visual aesthetics.

At present, the Waterfront Area, while encompassing breathtaking views of the surrounding Bay vistas, does not include public

park and open space areas that are accessible to the general public.

Gaining increased park and open space lands and formal public access for this area are important City goals. Any future development must account for public access and the proposed park and open space development as part of the Eastshore State Park. Special attention must be given to designing and siting both public and private facilities to ensure maximum protection of important view sheds and corridors.

### Potential Fishing Areas

The 1976 Environ Plan found that the mud flats and waterfront are important feeding and spawning areas for a variety of fish which support sport fishing. Sport fish include Jack, smelt, Striped bass, Pile perch, Starry flounder, Leopard shark, Dogfish shark, and Bat ray.

Future park development plans for the Waterfront discussed in this Element, should include plans for public fishing areas and other fishing areas, as well as shoreline enhancement measures to increase local populations of clams, bait shellfish, and other food organisms, thus attracting sport fish to areas readily accessible to the public.

### Public Trust Lands

The State Lands Commission has exercised the public trust for two tideland areas: the marsh areas and surroundings north of the plateau and west of I-580, and the area south of the neck to the Berkeley City limit line. This type of designation essentially preserves these areas in their natural state, as ecological units of study. This action was taken at the request of the City due to the historic and environmental value of these lands. Limited recreational and fishing activities are proposed. Any future park planning and development plans must account for the public trust designation of these areas.



## Albany Hill

Albany Hill is an important visual feature of the East Bay shoreline, and the most significant natural feature within the City of Albany. It provides a scenic, natural backdrop to the highly urbanized flatlands surrounding it on all sides. On the Hill itself, the woodland landscape and excellent views provide relief from the urban environment.

The Hill is characterized by steep slopes with a gently rounded summit. The highest elevation is approximately 338 feet.

Geologically, the Hill is composed of Franciscan sandstone, a hard rock which generally provides excellent foundation material for building. However, landslide areas have been identified on the northern slope of the Hill. These potential public safety hazards are discussed further in the Community Health and Safety Element.

The Hill is a regional landmark symbolizing the City of Albany. From the crest of the Hill, one can view San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, and Marin County. Views to the Hill provide a rich visual resource for enjoyment of the natural environment.

Albany Hill has been identified as a roosting site for the Monarch Butterfly. The butterflies roost in the wind-protected tree groves (Eucalyptus, Monterey Pine and Cypress), with nectar and water sources nearby.

As a symbol of the community that incorporates visual, wildlife and vegetation resources, the Hill should be sensitively treated in any development scheme. The entire crest of the Hill should be conserved for permanent open space. Future residential development should conform to the natural land form of the Hill. Significant stands of trees, native grasses and shrubs should be conserved and managed to enhance natural qualities. Further, any park or

residential development should consider the potential impacts to the Monarch Butterfly.

## CONSERVATION GOALS AND POLICIES

**Goal CROS 1: Enhance the natural features of the City's creeks and increase public access to them.**

### Policies:

CROS 1.1. Develop a comprehensive program to sponsor restoration and public access improvements for Albany's creeks. Continue to implement the 1977 Albany Creek Restoration Program. As part of this effort, continue to recognize that these areas have important wildlife and vegetation values.

CROS 1.2. Pursue funding for the restoration of Codornices and Cerrito Creeks through the Department of Water Resources Urban Stream Restoration Program, and the Coastal Conservancy.

CROS 1.3. Support the efforts of the Codornices Creek Association to restore Codornices Creek.

CROS 1.4. Develop policies to be included in the Watercourse Combining District to protect riparian habitat within the Creek Conservation Zone where practically feasible and applicable.

**Goal CROS 2: Increase street tree planting throughout Albany to beautify the City and to help purify the air.**

### Policies:

CROS 2.1. Develop and implement a comprehensive street tree planting program for City residential and commercial streets,



including establishing priorities, setting time schedules, and developing a comprehensive maintenance program.

**Goal CROS 3: Preserve the crest of Albany Hill for public open space use.**

**Policies:**

CROS 3.1. Designate the crest of Albany Hill for open space and require dedication of this area for public use through the City's subdivision ordinance requirements (see Land Use Element Policies).

CROS 3.2 Consider the potential impacts to the Monarch Butterfly roosting sites on Albany Hill within the context of developing Albany Hill Park and reviewing residential development applications on the remaining parcels.

**Goal CROS 4: Strive to maintain and improve the quality of Albany's natural environment and cultural resources, and natural resources in general.**

**Policies:**

CROS 4.1. Coordinate with CalTrans and MTC to monitor air quality impacts of improvements to Interstates 80 and 580 to assure that Albany's air quality will not be allowed to deteriorate any further.

CROS 4.2. Publicize the adverse water quality impacts of dumping residential toxics into domestic waste systems.

CROS 4.3. Promote preservation of trees and other vegetation by requiring an inventory of significant site vegetation prior to development application review.

CROS 4.4. Continue to cooperate in local, sub-regional and regional efforts to implement the

Clean Air Plan and meet State Air Quality Standards.

CROS 4.5. Require tree preservation measures during site design and construction.

CROS 4.6. Develop a comprehensive water conservation policy for City facilities and new development, including requirements for drought-resistant landscaping, water-conserving fixtures, and continue to support EBMUD public information campaigns to reduce water consumption.

**Goal CROS 5: Continue to value the importance of the Albany Waterfront area and shoreline as a place of scenic beauty.**

**Policies:**

CROS 5.1. Consider the scenic and visual importance of the waterfront area in any future private and public development.

CROS 5.2. Further preserve the scenic value of the Albany shoreline by prohibiting construction of any building or structure within a 100 foot minimum of the shoreline.

CROS 5.3. Recognize the value of the Hoffman Marsh, located north and west of the Buchanan Street/I-80/I-580 interchange, and protect bird feeding and nesting areas by limiting activities and preserving important habitat areas.

**RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

The following section describes Albany's existing park, recreation and open space areas. In total, the City provides about 1.87 acres of parkland per 1,000 population. While this amount is comparable to some other East Bay communities such as El Cerrito, it is

significantly less than current standards which recommend providing three to five acres per 1,000 population.

### **Strategies to Increase Parkland and Open Space Areas in Albany.**

State law, through the Subdivision Map Act, permits Albany to move toward a goal of providing three acres of parkland per 1,000 population. With this ratio, the City should strive to attain at least 49 acres of parkland and open space area during the planning period.

There are three dilemmas the City must consider when developing specific strategies to meet this overall goal:

- 1) The City has limited financial resources, now and throughout the planning period, to actually acquire more land.
- 2) There is an overall lack of open space because the community is essentially developed.
- 3) The City should recognize the inherent conflict between the goal of obtaining more open space vs. the State-mandated requirement to meet Albany's fair share housing goal. Most of the large, vacant land is zoned residential, and has been designated in the Housing Element as a housing opportunity site.

In developing a parkland acquisition strategy, it is therefore important to consider these dilemmas and establish priorities to determine the most important park and open space needs.

Two strong opportunities exist to increase the overall amount of and access to park and open space in the City during the planning period: the Albany Waterfront and U. C. Village. Portions of the Waterfront area will most likely be developed into park and open space lands as part of the Eastshore State Park Project. There

is available funding and the commitment of the East Bay Regional Park District and other groups to move forward with the project. Albany's immediate priorities for these lands have included remediating the bulb area and developing it into a park, developing the Bay Trail along the shoreline, and acquiring the neck area.

The U.C. Village Master plan process presents an opportunity to reorganize existing recreational and park spaces within the Village area so that they are more accessible to the entire community. While this strategy does not increase the overall amount of park land, it serves to increase access and make an existing resource more useful to the community.

A third opportunity exists with the development of Albany Hill/Creekside Park. A schedule should be developed to implement the park Master Plan, and funding should be allocated on an annual basis until it is completed.

The Plan recommends that the 1974 City Park Master Plan be updated, including specific goals, projected time schedules and funding sources. This step is important because it will raise awareness of what resources and funding may be necessary to maintain and improve the existing City parklands, and more importantly, how they may be improved.

It is also important to establish, at an early date, specific area policies that may serve to constrain development within certain areas of the City, particularly Albany Hill and the areas adjacent to the creeks. Some primary aims of this policy include protection from natural hazards such as flooding, proximity to existing important recreational areas, archeological resources and scenic or visual corridors.

Once these specific area policies are established, the City may want to consider certain lands with high constraints or high visual importance to the community for open space designation.



Funding for certain parcels could be sought through establishing an acquisition fund in the annual landscaping/lighting district funding, establishing a separate assessment district, obtaining funding through private, non-profit organizations and competing for dedicated State or regional park and open space funding.

As a last priority, the City may wish to strengthen language about developing a City-wide trail and pathway system that would link local park and open spaces together. Such a system could also link Albany with other, adjacent park and open space areas. Funding for this type of project is available through State and regional sources, as well as through transportation mitigation funds.

## **Park Facilities**

### Albany Hill and Creekside Parks

Approximately 6 acres at the crest of Albany Hill comprises Albany Hill Park. The Plan recommends the dedication of land remaining in private ownership which lies above the 220 foot elevation. Acquisition or dedication of this land will complete the creation of a park which encompasses the entire hilltop.

Creekside Park is located at the north end of Madison Street and directly west of the State Orientation Center for the Blind. Access is from Madison Street. Future access may also be created from the public path on the north side of Cerrito Creek, once a bridge is built, and directly from San Pablo Avenue along the north side of the Orientation Center, if State permission can be obtained. This 4-acre park is linked to Albany Hill Park by an easement which is planned to be developed as a trail.

The City has completed a conceptual Master Plan for the development of Albany Hill and Creekside Parks. The design concept for both of these parks is to retain them in a near natural state. The flat summit of the Hill and its immediate downhill banks are ideal for walking

trails to view plants, wildlife, and sweeping vistas. So that more people with varying physical abilities can enjoy this open space, the main paths should be made relatively level by carefully following the contours. Proper grading and surfacing is also important to ensuring access. Any other improvements should be minimal.

The design of Creekside Park should also respond to neighborhood needs with limited development of walks and family picnic areas, while retaining the natural quality of this landscape.

### Terrace Park

Terrace Park is a 1.5 acre neighborhood park located in the southeast part of Albany in an area bounded by Terrace Street on the north, Tevlin Street on the east, Francis Street on the south, and Neilson Street on the west. Single-family homes surround the park on all sides except along Terrace Street, the main entrance to the park.

At present, Terrace Park provides two tennis courts, a small paved area for basketball, picnic area with tables, a recreation building, playlot, and turf area for free play. The existing recreation building is in poor condition. An improvement plan for the park has been completed.

### Staniek Tot Lot

The Staniek Tot Lot is a play lot for small children located at the corner of Dartmouth and Talbot Streets.

### San Gabriel Avenue Mini-park

A small, pocket park is located between San Gabriel Avenue and the BART Linear Park. A master plan for the park was completed in 1990, and the first phase has been constructed.

### Bart Linear Park

The BART Linear Park was developed underneath the elevated BART tracks which run



north and south through the City. A landscaped pathway system for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists provides a continuous connection between the City's northern and southern boundaries.

#### Memorial Park

Memorial Park is bounded by Thousand Oaks Boulevard on the north, Carmel Avenue on the east, Portland Avenue on the south, and Albany High School on the west. The park is about 6.5 acres in size and is jointly used as a city park and as an outdoor physical education facility by Albany High School. Memorial Park provides four tennis courts, two children's playlots, two small paved picnic and barbecue areas, a multi-purpose sportfield, a fieldhouse, and rest rooms.

The park also includes the Veteran's Memorial Building and a small, City-owned clubhouse building. In 1993 the City completed a new child care center adjacent to the east end of the Veterans' Memorial Building which required demolition of the club-house building.

The Veterans' Memorial Building is owned and operated by Alameda County. It is used primarily by veterans' organizations. Although State law stipulates that veterans' buildings accommodate the activities of veteran groups, the regulations also permit other uses. Other communities such as Piedmont and Emeryville have been successful in combining veterans' and other, general community activities within their veterans' building facilities. Scheduling to meet the needs of both the community and veterans should be arranged cooperatively. The City should continue to work with Alameda County toward better management of the facility and more community use.

### **Community Facilities**

#### Albany Senior Center

The Albany Senior Center, located at 846 Masonic Avenue, serves as a focal point for senior citizen activities in Albany. The building

consists of a large community/dining room, a lounge and entry area, two offices and a classroom. An expansion and remodelling project for this building is planned during the next two years to meet growing space and service demands.

#### Albany Library and Community Center

In 1989, the City acquired the former Albany Hospital, located at 1247 Marin Avenue (between Masonic and Evelyn Avenues), for use as a new library and community center. The new building which replaces the overcrowded library building on Solano Avenue, contains a new library, a large community room, offices for the City's Recreation and Community Services Department, classrooms, meeting rooms, and a cable television studio.

### **Albany School District Facilities**

The Albany School District owns and operates an indoor swimming pool adjacent to Albany High School. It is the only public swimming pool in Albany.

Cougar Field on San Gabriel Avenue (within the El Cerrito city limits) is home to the Albany High School football, baseball and track teams. The field is reserved for school use as a first priority. However, private and public recreational uses are allowed with a permit from the School District.

#### Vista School

Vista School has a paved schoolyard with game courts and one large play structure.

#### Marin School

Marin School has heavily used basketball courts and play equipment areas with climbing structures and slides.

#### Cornell School

The Cornell School playground serves as an unsupervised play area after school hours. Cornell's playground consists of a large paved

area. It has a basketball court, kickball, baseball, and multi-purpose game area.

#### Mac Gregor School

The entire outdoor area is paved, with a small play area for the elementary school.

### **Joint Use Facilities**

#### Middle School and Middle School Park

Middle School and Middle School Park share a lighted multipurpose sport field, two tennis courts, and two full, and two half-size basketball courts. The park has a colorful multi-purpose play structure for young children. There is also a picnic area located in a grove of redwoods in the park.

During 1992, a Teen Center building was incorporated into the northwest end of the park, adjacent to the parking lot. This facility will provide programs and activities for Albany teenagers.

The City and the School District both own portions of this park and it is operated through a joint agreement.

### **Other Community Facilities**

#### Albany YMCA

The Albany YMCA at 921 Kains Avenue provides a variety of child care, physical fitness and recreational programs for individuals of all ages. This facility is an important community resource.

### **Recreation Programs**

#### Special Classes

Chinese cooking, basic cartooning, pre-natal health, and financial strategies, are among the special class listings sponsored by the Recreation and Community Services Department.

#### Teen Activities

The Albany Recreation and Community Services Department has a variety of services for teens. These activities include ski trips, dances, intramurals, and substance abuse programs.

#### Adult Sports

Tennis, basketball, and softball are sponsored by the City of Albany Recreation and Community Services Department.

### **Community Service Programs**

#### Seniors

The City of Albany Senior Center provides a wide range of social and service programs for persons aged 55 or older. Activities include classes, trips, card games and dancing. Social services, nutrition, medical, legal, and transportation services respond to the special needs of seniors.

#### Transportation

The City of Albany has a contract with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to provide paratransit for mobility impaired seniors and handicapped. Discount BART tickets and taxi vouchers are also available to these individuals. The City also owns a van for senior transit which is scheduled through the Senior Center.

#### Child Care

The Albany City Council and the Albany School District Board of Education appointed the Albany Child Care Committee in 1988 to study child care needs and services in Albany and to make recommendations to the City and School District. The Committee found that there is a high demand for on site, after school care, particularly for middle school aged children who are not served by traditional after school programs. Greater flexibility in the provision of child care including part time, evening, and weekend care also appears to be needed. Other



needs identified include more affordable child care and infant child care.

The Albany Pre-School, located at 850 Masonic, is a City-sponsored, parent cooperative program offering play activities for preschool children in the morning. Approximately 30 children are served in this program. An early morning and afternoon child care program serves preschool and kindergarten children from Albany schools. Approximately 40 children are served by this program.

The Albany Recreation and Community Services Department provides a before and after school child care program for children ages 5 - 11. The program runs from September through May, serving eight children in the 7:30 am to noon before school session, and forty children in the noon to 6:00 pm after school program. Waiting lists are common for these popular programs. A special component of this program is the provision of cab service which picks children up at school and brings them to the clubhouse in Memorial Park.

Summer day camp serves elementary school children. There are several sessions serving 50 to 75 children. Demand typically exceeds capacity for this program. Activities include arts and crafts, field trips, swimming, track, bowling, and cooking.

The Albany YWCA provides a large afterschool care program for Albany children. The program operates out of various school campuses in Albany.

The Albany Children's Center is a program of the Albany Unified School District, which provides child care for children ages 2 1/2 to 8. The Center serves 205 children in its preschool and after school programs. Enrollments are expected to remain the same for the next five years.

The University of California offers several child care programs at University Village which include Albany Parent Nursery, Kids Corner, and the Infant/Toddler Center.

Sick child care services are provided in Albany by a group called Weezles and Sneezles.

#### Services to the Disabled

Albany currently has no special programs for residents who are disabled. Improving access to programs and public facilities is an important and continuing community goal.

A needs assessment should be prepared to further determine program and facility needs for disabled residents, as well as to increase public access. This program should be an important community goal to help meet the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act. Such an assessment will also serve to guide the City in planning for full participation in all City-sponsored programs and facilities.

#### The Arts

The Albany Arts Committee was appointed by the City Council in 1988 to advise the Council and City staff on arts matters, and to serve as a facilitator and catalyst for the creation of art activities in Albany.

### **Other Community Programs**

#### Sports Activities

The Berkeley/Albany Soccer Club has over 1,000 players ages six to 16. The Club sponsors games every spring and fall.

Albany Little League provides baseball programs for boys and girls ages 8 through 18.

#### University of California Programs

The University of California offers a variety of classes for toddlers to adults. Classes in gymnastics, ballet, piano, and art are offered as well as track and field programs.



## **Future Park & Recreation Development**

### East Bay Shoreline Park.

During the past ten years, the City has been involved in planning and developing an Eastshore State Park. This State park would run the length of the entire East Bay shoreline, and include shore lands within the cities of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, and Albany. Portions of the park have been acquired and a trail system has been proposed to link the park with a continuous shoreline path.

Approximately \$40 million presently is available in State bonds and East Bay Regional Park District bonds for acquiring land and developing the park. In addition, the City has also obtained a \$500,000 State Coastal Conservancy Grant for public access improvements at the Waterfront.

During 1990-91, Albany, Berkeley and Emeryville formed a joint cooperative effort to strengthen efforts and balance interests to build the park. As proposed, the first phase of the park would include the Emeryville Crescent, north Waterfront Park and other adjacent shorelands in Berkeley, and a shoreline band, the neck and the point (or bulb) area in Albany. The two key pieces in Albany are described in more detail below.

### Albany Point State Park

In 1977, the City adopted the Environ Plan as a basis for developing the former Albany landfill for park use. Funding for this project was a major constraint. In 1984, the City was placed under an order by the Regional Water Quality Control Board to close and seal the landfill site. As a means to finance the capping and sealing requirements and to develop the park, the City entered into a lease agreement with the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Under the terms of the agreement, the City will receive \$2.5 million from the State to close the landfill in exchange for a 66-year lease of the site for

use as a State Park. The City agreed to be responsible for the operation and maintenance of Albany Point until there is a shoreline "link" between Albany and Berkeley that would be part of the overall Eastshore State Park. When the Shoreline Park is established, the State will take over the operation of the park system.

The City and the State Department of Parks and Recreation have been working since 1986 to develop a mutually acceptable landfill closure plan that provides sufficient potential for park development while meeting all the regulatory requirements placed upon the site. Some Bay fill around the perimeter of the landfill may be necessary. Slope stability and safe public access are also important priorities. The City has previously obtained permits from the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers for public access and Bay fill.

In addition, the City must still provide the Regional Water Quality Control Board with an approved closure plan which responds to the 1984 order. The City is now in the process of studying and developing engineering alternatives for landfill closure, with the goal of amending the original closure order to simplify the requirements and reduce overall costs.

Two other key issues for the park are to improve the Buchanan Street right-of-way leading up to the Park and capping and sealing the neck area to provide adequate and safe public access. Any future public or private development or use at the waterfront must consider these important park and recreation goals.

### The Bay Trail and Albany Shoreline Access

Providing public access along the Albany Waterfront shoreline will link Albany Point State Park and the other portions of the Eastshore State Park. This access will be developed by implementing The Bay Trail Plan (ABAG, 1989), a regional plan to develop pedestrian and bicycle paths around the San

Francisco Bay. The City's Waterfront Committee has been working on implementing the Bay Trail in Albany. Such a plan will require cooperation between the landowner, the Ladbroke Racing Corporation and the City.

#### Future Waterfront Parks

Future development plans or any changes in activities at the Albany Waterfront must consider the City's recreation and park goals for this area.

In 1992, the State Legislature passed AB 754, which shifted the land acquisition, planning and development responsibilities for the Eastshore State Park from the State Department of Parks and Recreation to the East Bay Regional Park District. This legislation also defined the boundaries of the park from the Bay Bridge to the Marina Bay Trail in Richmond.

The City must now focus on working effectively with EBRPD and other shoreline cities and interest groups to complete a park master plan. During 1993-94, the City, through the Albany Waterfront Committee, will undertake a citizen participation and education effort that should result in a conceptual plan for Albany's portion of the State Park. The main purpose of this effort is to develop and agree upon a conceptual plan for the Albany portions of the Park.

The City has begun to identify the important land areas and characteristics of the Albany portion of the Eastshore State Park. It should consist of the bulb, now owned by Albany; and Fleming Point, the beach, the plateau, and the neck, which must be acquired. It should be connected to other parts of the park, both to the north and the south, by the Bay Trail. There must be safe and easy access from the City of Albany for everyone, separate from access to the racetrack.

These land areas share important qualities such as view corridors and vista opportunities, easy access to the shoreline, and wildlife values.

Factors to consider when designing the park are the strong winds and noise from Highway 80.

#### University of California Land

The University of California has initiated a redevelopment planning process for its University Village in Albany. As a component of this plan, the City of Albany recommends moving the University's athletic fields to a site adjacent to the City of Albany Middle School and Middle School Park. This move could provide a reciprocal use of recreation areas and benefit both Village residents and residents of Albany. As a further recommendation, child care, the community center and other Village public facilities should be relocated in the long-term to achieve maximum coordination and benefits for both Albany Village residents and the City at large.

#### **Pathways**

##### Bikeways

A system of bikeways in Albany is becoming increasingly necessary as the number of bicyclists increases in Albany and in its neighboring cities. In addition, encouraging alternative forms of transportation increases air quality and helps to conserve energy.

Berkeley has established a bikeway system with portions of its routes close to Albany. The Albany BART bike path continues through the City of El Cerrito. Aside from the BART path, El Cerrito does not have a bikeway system at this time although it is possible to plan where connections to such a system would be appropriate.

Although it is part of the 1975 General Plan, the City has not implemented a city-wide bikeways system. A Bikeways Plan should be developed and included in the Circulation Element. The Plan should describe the necessary facilities and contains policies to implement the plan.



## Trails

Albany Hill and Creekside Park are quiet, natural environments. The enjoyment of these areas would be enhanced by developing a trail system throughout the parks, linking these two areas together. The Bay Trail is proposed as part of the future Eastshore State Park. The BART linear park also provides walking and bicycle paths through the City. It may be possible to link the Bay Trail, Creekside Park and the BART trails together via an extended trail along Cerrito Creek.

## **RECREATION, PARK AND OPEN SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Goal CROS 6: Develop the maximum feasible park and open space areas in Albany.**

### **Policies:**

CROS 6.1. Update the 1974 Park and Recreation Master Plan for the City and establish specific goals, projects, funding sources and time schedules. This work should include detailed improvement and maintenance plans for the City's parks, and be coordinated with the five year capital improvement projects program.

CROS 6.2. Work in conjunction with all existing and potential recreational land-holding parties to promote joint planning, acquisition, development, and joint use and maintenance of park sites and recreational facilities, including child care, community facilities and athletic fields.

Specifically, encourage and support joint planning efforts for the University of California lands (University Village). Consideration should be given to moving the existing athletic fields and relocating other Village community facilities in order to achieve maximum

coordination and benefits for both the Village residents and the City.

CROS 6.3. Develop a plan for bikeways for Albany, linking existing bike paths in Berkeley and El Cerrito. Implement this plan as part of the City's overall road maintenance and traffic signs program within the annual capital projects budget, as well as through specific transportation funding (refer to Circulation Element.)

CROS 6.4 Increase non-automobile public access routes throughout the City by connecting major pathway systems such as the BART linear park to other City, regional and State Parks.

CROS 6.5 Continue to work with Alameda County on improving the operation and management of the Veterans' Memorial Building and increasing community access to the facility.

**Goal CROS 7: Achieve a complimentary mix of private and public uses at the Albany Waterfront which provide for maximum feasible open space, recreation and public access to the waterfront area.**

### **Policies:**

CROS 7.1. Implement the Bay Trail Plan along the Albany shoreline. Work with the landowner, the track operator, appropriate citizen and environmental groups, the State Department of Parks and Recreation, Caltrans, the East Bay Regional Park District, the Coastal Conservancy and ABAG to achieve this goal.

CROS 7.2 Consider the important surrounding wildlife and vegetation resources that must be adequately protected when developing the alignment of the Bay Trail.



CROS 7.3 Require that public access to the shoreline and to Albany Point be a part of any future waterfront development plans and that future automobile, pedestrian and bicycle access be consistent with and coordinated with future State and regional park and open space plans at the Waterfront.

CROS 7.4 Continue to work with the State Department of Parks and Recreation, the cities of Emeryville and Berkeley, and other State, regional, and local agencies to develop the former Albany landfill site into a State Waterfront Park and to develop the first phase of the Eastshore State Park.

CROS 7.5. Work closely with the EBRPD, the cities of Berkeley, Emeryville, Richmond and Oakland, and other State, regional and local groups to complete the acquisition, planning and development of the Eastshore State Park.

CROS 7.6 Assure that the planning for the Eastshore State Park is consistent with the City's conceptual plan for the Albany portion of the Eastshore State Park.

**Goal CROS 8: Increase the City's range of child care programs and expand child care opportunities throughout the City during the planning period by committing adequate resources and funding for facilities and programs.**

**Policies:**

CROS 8.1. Continue working with the Albany Unified School District, the YMCA, U.C. Berkeley and other providers to develop and coordinate child care programs.

CROS 8.2. Strengthen and expand child care programs throughout the City for all age groups through increasing awareness and information

about types of programs, improving physical facilities and access for all income groups and long-range planning for future needs.

**Goal CROS 9: Continue to enhance the City's programs for senior citizens.**

**Policies:**

CROS 9.1. Take advantage of all available funding sources in maintaining and improving the programs at the Senior Center.

CROS 9.2. Continue working with Albany's senior citizen organizations to increase participation and access to senior citizen programs.

**Goal CROS 10: Provide for public arts projects within the City of Albany.**

**Policies:**

CROS 10.1. Consider establishing a fund for public arts projects from a variety of sources including grant monies.

CROS 10.2. Develop guidelines and criteria for purchase or commission of public arts projects.





CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE PLAN

- City Parks and Open Space
- Tot Lot
- Proposed Parks and Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Creek Conservation Zone
- Creek Conservation Zone (100 ft. from creek center)
- Creek Access
- Continuation of East Bay Shoreline Park
- Significant Trees

0 400 ft. 1200 ft.

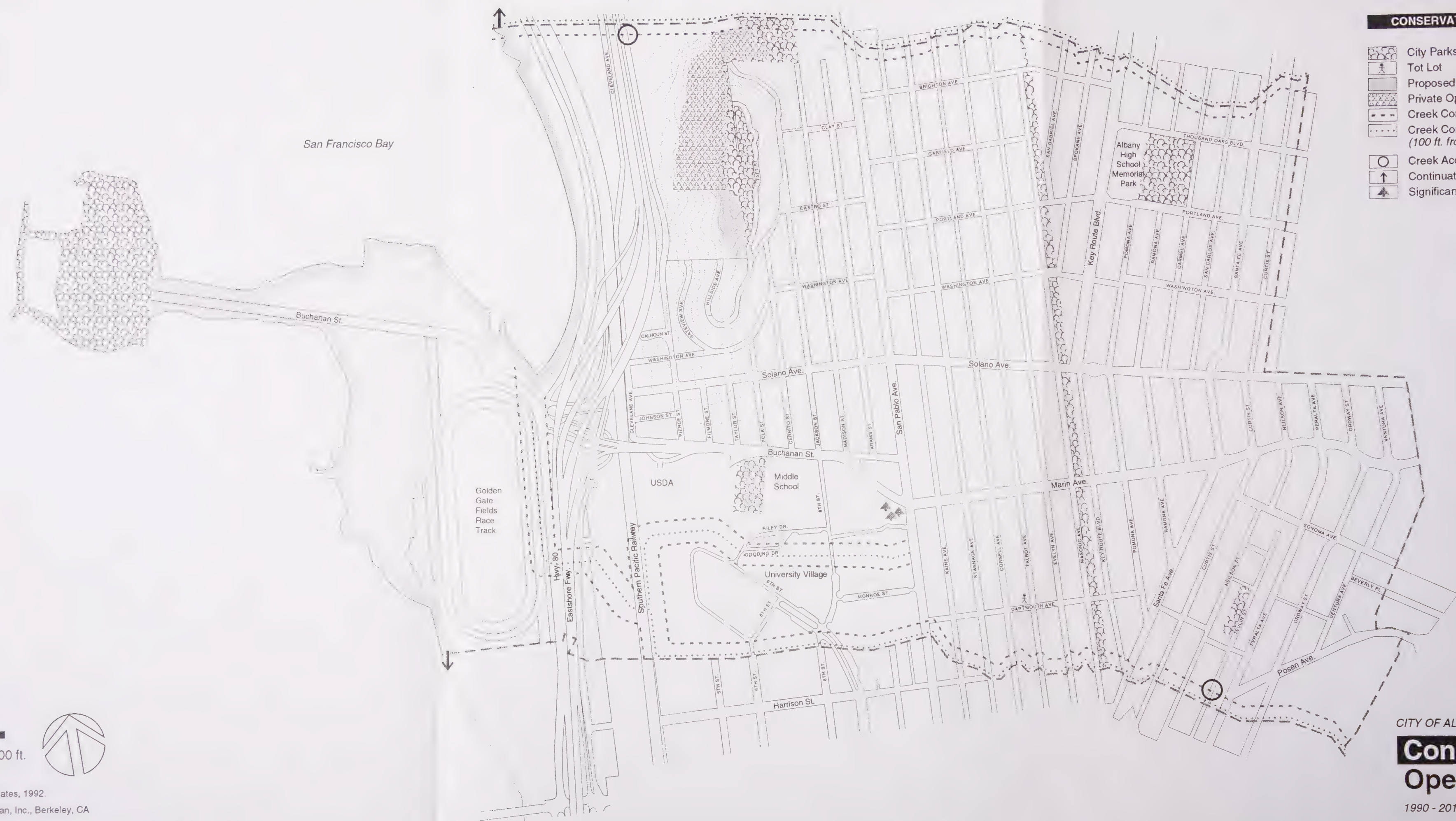


Source: Newman Planning Associates, 1992.  
Graphics: Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., Berkeley, CA

CITY OF ALBANY

Conservation/  
Open Space Plan

1990 - 2010













# COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

This Element of the General Plan evaluates the existence of a variety of natural and man-made hazards in Albany and presents goals and policies to guide future community actions in ways to reduce or avoid these potential hazards. Natural hazards discussed in this Element include flooding and seismic hazards. This Element also addresses the following man-made hazards: fire, crime, hazardous materials, emergency preparedness, and noise.

The policies contained in this Element are the result of significant technical research as well as community input through the 1989 General Plan public workshop series. The technical reports that have guided preparation of the Seismic, Noise, and Flooding sections of this Element are listed below (Note: the General Plan includes these reports in a Technical Appendix available in the Planning Department):

- 1) "Albany General Plan Update Geotechnical Appendix," prepared by Gary Anttonen and Karen Hee, April, 1989. Referred to hereafter as the Seismic Safety Technical Study.
- 2) "Albany General Plan Update Noise Technical Appendix," prepared by Illingworth and Rodkin, Inc., April, 1989. Referred to hereafter as the Noise Technical Study.
- 3) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), City of Albany, California; prepared for the National Flood Insurance Program by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1980.

These sources provide a generalized evaluation of seismic, noise, and flooding hazards in Albany, but cannot be relied upon to provide site specific hazard information. Areas potentially subject to natural hazards are depicted on the Environmental Hazards Map contained in this Element.

## FLOODING

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) have been prepared by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development showing the areas of a community that could be flooded to a depth of one foot or more in the event of a "1%" or 100-year flood occurrence. The areas of concern in Albany are depicted on the Environmental Hazards Map and can be generally described as follows:

- 1) a roughly 100-foot-wide band adjacent to Codornices Creek for its entire length in Albany.
- 2) the land adjacent to Cerrito Creek at the base of Albany Hill.
- 3) the land around Interstate 580 and the railroad tracks at the point where Cerrito Creek enters the Bay.
- 4) the open area immediately surrounding the place where Codornices Creek parallels I-80 and flows into Albany Mudflat.

In a 500-year flood, the following additional areas might be expected to be inundated:

- 1) the area extending from the western edge of University Village and of the Western Regional Research Lab to Interstate 80.
- 2) a slightly wider strip along the banks of Codornices Creek extending from the Bay to just beyond Kains.

- 3) a narrow band just south of Cerrito Creek between I-80 and the Bay.

Unusually heavy, prolonged rainfall during the winter of 1982-83, equivalent to the 100-year storm event, caused significant flooding and related damage throughout the Bay Area. In Albany, the effects were limited to one debris flow on Albany Hill and some flooding of Codornices Creek approximately 100 yards east of the I-80 culvert, caused by clogged culverts. The City's Department of Public Works has responsibility for responding to such events. Since the winter of 1982-83, the Department of Public Works has initiated an annual Fall clean out of all City culverts. Abutting property owners, including the University of California and Southern Pacific Corporation, are responsible for maintenance of culverts located on their properties.

Other types of flooding that could occur in Albany include tsunamis and dam failure. Both of these flood events would be induced by major earthquakes.

Tsunamis (long sea waves caused by underwater seismic disturbances) are extremely rare. The maximum recorded tsunami at the Golden Gate was approximately 7.4 feet which produced a wave of approximately 3.4 feet along the Albany Waterfront. A tsunami of this height could be expected about once in every 100 years and would not likely cause substantial damage in Albany except right along the shoreline. A map prepared in 1980 for the Albany General Plan shows that a 200-year tsunami would flood almost all of the land west of I-80 as well as a small sliver of land along the railroad tracks at the southern end of Albany.

Seismic hazards in the Albany planning area associated with a M (magnitude) 7.5 earthquake on the Hayward fault include a low potential for local flooding along Cerrito Creek caused by the failure of San Pablo Clearwell and/or Summit Reservoirs.

## SEISMIC HAZARDS

A seismic safety technical report was prepared for this Plan which evaluated new information concerning seismic and related geologic hazards compiled for the East Bay area since 1980 as well as previously existing data.

The City of Albany is located in a region of infrequent, large magnitude earthquakes that pose a threat to existing and future man-made structures. The San Andreas and Hayward faults pose the greatest seismic risk to the City. The Hayward fault is located approximately one mile east of the City and the San Andreas fault approximately 17 miles to the west. Both faults are capable of causing very strong to violent ground shaking within Albany.

Seismologists currently estimate that there is a 20 percent chance of a M 7.5 earthquake and a 30 percent chance of a "large" earthquake on the Hayward Fault during the next 30 years. Thus, there is a significant risk of a major earthquake on the fault line closest to Albany during the planning period.

The potential for intense ground shaking in Albany could result in a variety of hazards which are related to the type of ground material in a given area and location and type of improvements. In areas underlain by consolidated bedrock such as Albany Hill, seismic hazards include small rock falls and surficial landslides. In areas underlain by unconsolidated sediments such as east, central, and southwestern Albany, ground failure and differential settlement could result from a severe earthquake. Hazards in areas underlain by expansive soils (Bay Mud) and compacted, engineered fill as found throughout the freeway and Waterfront Area include shrink-swell activity that can disrupt or damage foundations, paved surfaces, and underground utilities.

The effects of a major earthquake upon the City of Albany would be to cause human casualties,



moderate to severe structural damage, disruption of surface streets and utilities, small stream bank failures, local landsliding on Albany Hill, disruptions and collapse of freeway roadbeds, bridges and access ramps, and failure of landfill slopes as well as liquefaction along the Albany Waterfront.

Although it is not possible to fully reduce or avoid the potential hazards to residents and structures in Albany caused by a major earthquake, this Plan proposes a number of measures to ensure that the full range of prevention and planning tools are implemented through the City's Zoning Ordinance, building codes, public safety and public information programs.

## **FIRE HAZARDS**

Fire hazards are unique in that they can be induced by natural causes or by the intentional or accidental actions of man. In urban areas, the most serious concern is fires in dense residential areas and commercial and industrial buildings containing hazardous or combustible materials.

The Albany Fire Department's response time of less than 3 minutes to any location in the City exceeds urban fire response time standards. The greatest danger of extensive fires in the developed portions of the City is from a major earthquake. Gas and water mains could both be ruptured and the Albany Fire Department, as well as departments of adjacent cities, would be unable to immediately respond to all needs. This hazard is exacerbated in Albany by its dense development pattern. Because houses are built so closely together, fire can spread easily, particularly from garage to garage. The Fire Department has been requiring interior sprinkler systems in most new construction on Albany Hill for the past decade. Sprinklers are required whenever the building's height, density or access makes fire control difficult.

Albany's residential areas are fairly well buffered from its industrial areas. Thus, threats to residents from industrial accidents are minimal. The use of hazardous materials in Albany's commercial and industrial areas is presently being inventoried by the County Department of Environmental Health. When this information is compiled, the City Fire Department will inspect all such businesses (please refer to the Hazardous Wastes section below for further information).

The potential for grassland or woodland fires is limited to Albany Hill since it is the only extensively wooded area in Albany. Water lines to Albany Hill have adequate supply and pressure for fire fighting. Although streets on the Hill are narrow, there is adequate access for emergency vehicles.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Emergency preparedness plans are necessary for all urban areas, especially those which, like the San Francisco Bay area, are subject to earthquakes, floods and tsunamis in addition to the common urban hazards of major fires or explosions.

Immediately following a major disaster such as an earthquake, residents of Albany may be without utilities, water, telephone, and emergency services. It may not be possible for governments and service districts to provide all the services needed, therefore, it is generally recognized that in the first three days after a major disaster, citizens must be prepared to be self-sufficient. This means that emergency preparedness is not only a governmental responsibility; individual residents of a community must also make preparations for such occurrences.

The City has adopted a Multihazard Functional Plan (1986). The plan addresses Albany's response to extraordinary emergency situations associated with natural disasters, technological



incidents, and nuclear defense operations. The prime responsibility for implementing this plan lies with the Fire Department with secondary response by the Police Department.

During 1992, the City retained a Disaster Preparedness and Community Response Coordinator. This new position represented a significant step in the City's ability to respond to a disaster or emergency. The Coordinator has been developing new ALERT groups and working with existing groups by providing important emergency information and training. Part of the City's efforts will also focus on evaluating the overall preparedness level of the City, and how emergency response can be improved within the limited resources of a small City. Future programs include simulated disaster responses, increased City-wide medical and emergency training for staff, improved emergency procedures and assisting businesses with disaster preparedness efforts.

The recommendations included in this element call for continuing these efforts and to complete the City staff, neighborhood and business disaster preparedness program by 1996.

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

Hazardous materials are those which can cause harm to living things by their uncontrolled presence or diffusion. These materials include toxic metals, chemicals, gases, flammable and/or explosive substances, corrosive materials, infectious substances, and radioactive material. These materials may come from local businesses, research facilities, home use, highway spills, or be present in landfills.

There is increasing concern about the use, storage and transportation of these materials. As the types and uses of hazardous materials become more stringently regulated by State and Federal laws, the attention of authorities has turned toward storage and disposal of permitted materials. The Waters Bill (Hazardous

Materials Storage and Emergency Response) regulates the storage of hazardous materials in California.

The Alameda County Waste Management Authority and the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health have been assigned responsibility for regulation of hazardous materials in the County, with monitoring in Albany by the Fire Department.

In Albany, the major generators and users of hazardous materials are small businesses such as auto body shops, dry cleaners, printing plants and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Facility on Buchanan Street. Each business using or storing more than a specific amount of a hazardous material is required to submit a plan for the use and storage of these materials to the County. In addition, Alameda County has instituted a program for small waste generators and household hazardous materials. A specific storage site has not been designated for this program, although a site will be located in northern Alameda County.

A master plan for the County has been developed for regulating, managing and properly disposing of hazardous materials. This plan is titled the "Alameda County Hazardous Waste Management Plan" and must be submitted to the California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control for approval as required by State law. The purpose of the Plan is to develop and implement hazardous waste management policies in Alameda County. The primary focus is to encourage the reduction of hazardous waste that is generated in order to minimize the number of hazardous waste management facilities.

The lead agency for this program, the Alameda County Waste Management Authority, approved the Plan in December, 1991. The City of Albany approved the Plan in April, 1992.

In addition, Albany has adopted a Household Hazardous Waste Element as required by AB 939 (The Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989). This Element describes how the City will manage and dispose of its hazardous waste. Albany is working with Alameda County on developing a HHW/Mini-Generator Collection Program. This program consists of building three permanent collection facilities, including one in northern Alameda County.

## **CRIME PREVENTION**

A major attraction of Albany, according to residents, is the high quality of public services provided. Citizens have high expectations for their municipal services in Albany.

According to FBI statistics, the Albany crime rate is lower than that of its neighboring cities. The most common crime in Albany is burglaries from automobiles. The next most common crime is auto theft and the third is residential burglaries. The Police Department reports that in a very high percentage of cases, the perpetrators of these crimes come from outside Albany.

## **NOISE**

Noise is defined as unwanted sound. Noise is a human-induced environmental hazard that may be defined as an accumulation of sounds from many sources in the urban environment. Noise is measured in decibels (dB) with 0 dB corresponding roughly to the threshold of hearing and 140 dB to the threshold of pain. The background or "ambient" noise level in urban areas can be measured and expressed in terms of Average Day/Night Noise Levels (Ldn). The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides noise standards for urban development. Current HUD criteria state that building sites exposed to Ldn of 65 dBA or below are acceptable for residential uses. It is a long term goal of HUD to lower that level to an Ldn of 55 dBA.

Noise which is excessive in either duration or intensity can be not only an annoyance but a health hazard. The Technical Appendix on Noise prepared for this Plan includes information on the effects of noise on the general population. These include interference with communication and speech, interference with sleep, interference with performance and learning as well as documented physiological effects and the possibility of hearing loss.

The major source of undesirable noise in Albany is vehicular traffic. The present and future noise environment in Albany is depicted on the Noise Contours Map. Noise measurements taken during the preparation of this Plan show that portions of Albany, specifically the west side of Albany Hill, are subjected to vehicular noise levels beyond that considered desirable by state and national standards. In addition, BART trains along Masonic and Key Route Avenues generate noise that exceeds the desirable standards during peak hours. Figures presented at the end of this Element define the exterior noise levels that different land uses can safely tolerate. Future development in Albany should be compatible with these criteria for outdoor noise exposure or should provide appropriate mitigation to reduce noise levels.

In 1992, the City's Noise Ordinance was revised and strengthened to limit noise generating activities, particularly in residential areas. The revised Ordinance established more specific and measurable criteria for identifying noise problems so that they can be more effectively eliminated.

The development anticipated in the Plan will not significantly increase the noise levels in Albany in any location. While increased traffic will occur on local streets and on the freeway, neither noise source is expected to generate increases of more than 2-3 dBA. In most places in Albany, the increase will be as small as 1 dB. Studies have shown that a 3 dBA increase or



decrease in noise level is required before the average person can notice it.

New development on the west side of Albany Hill should be required to meet noise attenuation standards for indoor living (generally below 45 dB). The Plan also calls for the City to develop a program to assist homeowners in retrofitting noise insulation in their homes where exterior noise levels exceed acceptable levels. With regard to BART noise, the Plan recommends working with BART wherever feasible to provide better noise insulation measures along the tracks.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY GOALS AND POLICIES:**

**Goal CHS 1: Minimize the impact of flooding, seismic, and geologic hazards on the citizens of Albany and their property.**

### **Policies:**

CHS 1.1. Conserve riparian and littoral habitat within the area 100 feet from creek centerline in appropriate areas both for its importance in reducing flood impacts and for its aesthetic value.

CHS 1.2. Review and revise City Codes and regulations to ensure that future construction of critical facilities (schools, police stations, fire stations, etc.) in Albany will be able to resist the effects of an earthquake of M 7.5 on the Hayward Fault and sustain only minor structural damage, remain operative, safe, and quickly be able to be restored to service.

CHS 1.3. Develop a seismic safety structural inventory and assessment program which reviews the structural integrity of all existing critical facilities and identifies what reconstruction would be necessary to meet a seismic safety standard. After this survey is

completed, the City should evaluate the safest places to locate critical services and facilities.

CHS 1.4. Require that a geologic investigation be conducted on new construction of critical facilities in areas identified on the Environmental Hazards Map as having Medium-High to High susceptibility to ground failure during an earthquake.

CHS 1.5. Develop an unreinforced masonry building program for commercial areas and multi-family residences. This program should be phased with the initial efforts aimed at determining the extent of risk to each identified building. In later phases, the City should focus efforts on strengthening or abating the most hazardous buildings and those with the highest occupancy loads. The program should also include various financing options and programs to aid private property owners in meeting the requirements.

CHS 1.6. Require review of the Environmental Hazards Map at the time a development is proposed. Assure implementation of appropriate mitigation measures if hazards are identified.

**Goal CHS 2: Strengthen and update City programs and procedures for emergency preparedness.**

### **Policies:**

CHS 2.2 Update and revise the Multihazard Functional Plan as appropriate, as part of the City-wide earthquake preparedness program. As part of this effort, review the data and information available from other cities that responded to the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. In particular, the plan should include community and business resources that could be gathered to help with emergency response efforts (equipment, food, medical care, etc.).



CHS 2.1 Continue to develop a City-wide disaster preparedness program to organize and train residents and area employees so that they can assist themselves and others during the first 72 hours following an earthquake or other major disaster. This program should also include improved emergency procedures and assistance for businesses with disaster preparedness efforts.

CHS 2.3 Develop the program, equipment and procedures for an emergency operations center at the new Library/Community Center on Marin Avenue.

CHS 2.4 Maintain present fire protection level of service throughout Albany.

CHS 2.5 Ensure that police service to all areas of Albany maintains its present level of service.

**Goal CHS 3: Reduce the exposure of present and future Albany residents and workers to hazardous materials.**

**Policies:**

CHS 3.1. Evaluate and map the presence of hazardous materials at any development or redevelopment sites filled prior to 1974, or sites historically devoted to uses which may have involved hazardous wastes.

CHS 3.2. Continue to participate and cooperate with the Alameda County Hazardous Waste Management Authority and the County Department of Environmental Health in their efforts to require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials.

CHS 3.3. Support State and Federal legislation to strengthen safety requirements for the transportation of hazardous materials.

**Goal CHS 4: Prevent exposure of Albany citizens to unacceptable noise levels and alleviate noise exposure problems where feasible.**

**Policies:**

CHS 4.1. Require preparation of an acoustical report for any project which would be exposed to noise levels in excess of those shown as “normally acceptable” in Figure 3 and Table 1 and as generally identified on the Noise Contours Map.

CHS 4.2. Require mitigation measures for new residential, transient lodging, motel/hotel, school, library, church and hospital development to reduce noise exposure to “normally acceptable” levels.

CHS 4.3. Require post-construction monitoring and sign-off by an acoustical engineer ensure that City guidelines have been achieved whenever mitigation measures to achieve conformance with the criteria in Figure 3 and Table 1 are imposed.

CHS 4.4. Require mitigation measures be incorporated into and an acoustical report be prepared for projects that would cause the following criteria to be exceeded or would have the potential for creating significant community annoyance:

- 1) the Ldn in existing residential areas to exceed an Ldn of 60 dB minimum;
- 2) the Ldn in existing residential areas to increase by 3 dB or more if the Ldn currently exceeds 60 dB; or
- 3) noise levels that would be expected to create significant adverse community response.

CHS 4.5. Work with Caltrans to evaluate and develop information on opportunities for

improved noise insulation that could be given to residents wishing to reduce the noise levels at their homes.

**Goal CHS 5: Reduce the impact of BART noise.**

**Policies:**

CHS 5.1 Develop a program to measure noise impacts along the BART corridor and develop a program to reduce identified noise problems.

CHS 5.2 Work with BART to install noise insulation improvements along the BART tracks in Albany as part of their overall capital improvement program during 1995-2000.





- SEISMIC ZONES**  
Potential Ground Failure
- High (Artificial Fill)
  - Medium-High (Younger Alluvial Deposits and Fans)
  - Medium-Low (Older Alluvial Deposits)
  - Low (Franciscan Bedrock)

- FLOODING ZONES**  
Zones Subject to 100 Year Flood
- Zone A1  
Zone AO  
Zone VI
- Zones Subject to 100 Year Flood
- Zone B  
Zone Subject to Minimal Flooding  
Zone C

Note: The earthquake-induced landslide potential on Albany Hill is described in the Community Health and Safety Element Text.



Source: Flood zones information is based on the 1980 Flood Insurance Rate Map by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Seismic zone information is from Anttonen and Hee, Geologic Consultants 1989.

Graphics: Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., Berkeley, CA











# GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

## INTRODUCTION

This section of the General Plan identifies actions and programs the City will use to achieve goals and policies in the previous elements.

The private sector plays a significant role in Plan implementation by initiating and financing most development. The General Plan policies and policy maps (Land Use, Circulation, and Conservation and Open Space) will inform applicants about the City's goals and policies for the physical development of Albany. The City's Ordinances, Codes and programs, described below, will serve to coordinate the City's response to development proposals and insure that approved projects are consistent with General Plan policies.

There are six major approaches to implement the policies and programs outlined in the General Plan:

- 1) Review and amendment of the City's Zoning Ordinance
- 2) Review the City's Subdivision Ordinance
- 3) Review and amendment of the City's development review procedures (including permit processing and the California Environmental Quality Act or CEQA)
- 4) Initiate various plans and studies to analyze possible future courses of action or develop specific programs
- 5) Initiate other programs specifically recommended in the Plan

- 6) Incorporate projects into the City's Capital Improvements Program

The Implementation Program Schedule Chart divides the policies and programs contained in the General Plan into a specific time-line for action. The Chart is included at the end of the Implementation Program section of the General Plan.

The schedule that has been outlined is based on the present staffing and budget limits of the Albany Planning Department. By necessity, some of the programs have been presented in a phased manner, considering current workloads. The City could choose to pursue a number of these policies simultaneously or more aggressively by increasing the resources for specific time periods or programs.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

### Review and Amendments To The Zoning Ordinance

The City's Zoning Ordinance includes various land use districts. Each parcel of land in the community is designated in one of these districts. The Zoning Ordinance establishes development standards for minimum lot size, building height, setback limits, parking, and other development parameters within each land use zone.

State Law requires that the City's Zoning Ordinance be consistent with the General Plan. Thus, the land use designations and standards for land use density and intensity must be reflected in the Zoning Ordinance.

Many of the policies and programs in this Plan will require the City to review various Zoning Ordinance amendments. The schedule calls for a comprehensive Zoning Ordinance review to be accomplished within a three year time frame. Specific priorities are outlined in each phase.

## **Review of the Subdivision Ordinance**

The City's Subdivision Ordinance regulates the division of land for development. The State Subdivision Map Act establishes statewide uniformity in local subdivision procedures and requires that local Subdivision Ordinances be consistent with the General Plan.

The Subdivision Ordinance contains requirements for subdivision design and infrastructure improvements. It also contains provisions for dedications of public improvements or payment of in-lieu fees by developers for public access, parks and recreational facilities, schools, and other facilities.

The Albany Subdivision Ordinance was adopted in 1987. The Ordinance contains parkland dedication and in-lieu fee requirements. This Ordinance will be reviewed for consistency with the current General Plan.

It is expected that the review of the Subdivision Ordinance can be accomplished within Fiscal Year 1992-93.

## **Development Review Procedures**

The City's Environmental Review procedures fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the potential significant environmental impacts of development proposals. Through the environmental review process, many General Plan policies are implemented. Examples of these include preservation of riparian habitat, protection of archaeological and cultural resources, the reduction of excessive noise, and the avoidance of natural hazards.

When a project is found to have potentially significant adverse environmental impacts, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared. The EIR provides information and

analysis of these impacts and recommends mitigation measures to reduce or avoid them.

The City's environmental review procedures will be supplemented with a list of applicable General Plan policies to use during the initial study process. This project will be completed during 1993.

In addition, the overall permit processing procedures will be reviewed in light of the Housing Element policies and code enforcement recommendations. This project is planned for completion by 1993.

## **Specific Plans and Special Studies**

A specific plan is a tool to implement General Plan goals and policies. It may be applied to all or a portion of the area covered by a general plan. The City of Albany presently has one specific plan which pertains to Albany Hill.

### **Albany Hill**

The Albany Hill Area Specific Plan, adopted in 1978, establishes land use and design policies for development on Albany Hill. The land use densities in the Specific Plan exceed those of the new Albany General Plan for Albany Hill. The Specific Plan will need to be revised, updated and possibly amended to become consistent with the adopted General Plan.

### **San Pablo Avenue**

The General Plan calls for enhancing and intensifying commercial development along San Pablo Avenue in order to create a more attractive environment and increase sales tax revenues to the City. A number of specific studies are recommended to help with this general goal, including evaluating auto-oriented uses on the Avenue and considering various public improvements.

## **The Waterfront Area**

The General Plan includes policies to guide future planning at the Waterfront. The parks include the “Bulb” and the shoreline perimeter. The Plan assumes the Golden Gate Fields racetrack will remain in place during the Plan period.

Future development proposals for the racetrack area may require General Plan amendments which then must be approved by the voters prior to final adoption.

The Plan includes important goals and policies for Recreation and Open Space at the Waterfront. No specific implementation schedule has been outlined.

## **Other Programs**

Other programs and projects are recommended within the Plan and are incorporated into the master schedule. These include the unreinforced masonry building program, the earthquake safety program and the expansion of the fire code enforcement program.

## **Capital Improvement Program**

Planning for capital improvements, the network of publicly owned facilities such as roads, water and sewer facilities, public buildings, and parks, plays an important role in General Plan implementation. The City must annually review its capital improvement program for consistency with the General Plan. The City of Albany maintains a 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Future capital improvement programs and budgets must be monitored for consistency with the General Plan. In addition, the specific recommendations contained in the Plan must be incorporated into the Capital Improvements Program, beginning in 1993.

## **MONITORING AND AMENDING THE GENERAL PLAN**

### **Monitoring General Plan Implementation**

State Law requires that the City review the General Plan annually and report on progress made to implement its policies. The City's Planning Department will report to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council annually on General Plan implementation.

### **General Plan Amendment Process**

The General Plan is a long-range guide to planning Albany's physical environment. However, in the course of its implementation, changes in the community's values, demographics, and in the local economy may require adaptations in the Plan so that it remains current and useful.

State Law provides that the General Plan may not be amended more often than four times per year. However, each amendment may include more than one change to the General Plan.

In order for the Plan to continue to be comprehensive and internally consistent, as required by State Law, General Plan amendments must be carefully considered so that the integrity of the Plan is not eroded. In addition, the public must become involved in the amendment process if the Plan is to continue to reflect community values.



## GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM SCHEDULE 1993 - 1995

	Jan 1993	Mar 1993	Jun 1993	Sept 1993	Jan 1994	Mar 1994	June 1994	Sept 1994	Jan 1995	Mar 1995
I. Zoning Ordinance Amendments										
A. Affordable Housing:										
Adopt Inclusionary Housing & In-Lieu Fee;										
Establish Affordable Housing Fund.										
B. Ballot Measure to Amend Measure D for Senior Housing Exemption										
C. Rezone Kains and Adams Streets to Medium Density										
D. Zoning Amendment Requiring Adaptable Disabled Housing Units										
E. Emergency & Transitional Housing Zoning Amendment										
F. Zoning Amendment to Allow Limited Equity Cooperatives										
G. Rezoning of Kains and Adams Commercial Expansion Areas										
H. Revise Watercourse Combining District (WC) and Riparian Habitat Protection Regulations										
II. Subdivision Ordinance Consistency with General Plan										
III. Permit Processing and Development Review Procedures										
IV. Special Studies & Planning Projects										
A. Review Albany Hill Specific Plan										

# **GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM SCHEDULE 1993 - 1995** (continued)

	Jan 1993	Mar 1993	June 1993	Sept 1993	Jan 1994	Mar 1994	June 1994	Sept 1994	Jan 1995	Mar 1995
B. Parking Studies:										
1) Kains/Adams Parking Survey										
2) Solano Ave. Parking Survey										
3) Municipal Parking Lot Feasibility Study										
4) In Lieu Parking Fee										
5) Associated Environmental Review, Engineering and Design										
C. Revise 1974 Park and Recreation Master Plan										
D. Develop Bike Route Program										
E. Solano Avenue Studies:										
1) Public Spaces Enhancement										
2) Strengthen Design Criteria										
3) Lower Solano Avenue Cultural & Performing Arts Overlay Zone										
4) Commercial/Residential Transition Area										
F. San Pablo Avenue Studies:										
1) Design Guidelines for Commercial										
2) Public Improvement Program										
3) Auto Retail Use Survey										
G. Update & Revise City Emergency Response Plan										
H. Program to Reduce BART Noise										
I. Traffic Congestion Monitoring										

## GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM SCHEDULE 1993 - 1995

(continued)

	Jan 1993	Mar 1993	June 1993	Sept 1993	Jan 1994	Mar 1994	June 1994	Sept 1994	Jan 1995	Mar 1995
V. Other Programs										
A. Street Tree Planting Program										
B. Implement Bay Trail Plan & East Shore State Park Plan										
C. Develop Coordinated Emergency Operations Center										
D. Complete Unreinforced Masonry Program										
E. Develop Neighborhood Earthquake Preparedness Program										
F. Revise Noise Ordinance										
VI. Capital Improvement Program										
Annually Monitor Program; Review General Plan Programs; Establish Budgets & Priorities As Required.										







# REFERENCE

## STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS

California Government Code Section 65302 mandated that a General Plan contain seven elements in 1989. The following are the primary page references in this General Plan for these required elements:

### Land Use Element

Land Use Plan Map, end of Land Use Element.

Land Use Inventory Appendix E.

Text Pages: 23 to 40.

### Circulation Element

Circulation Plan Map, end of Circulation Element.

Text Pages 41 to 47.

### Housing Element

Housing Opportunities Map, end of Housing Element.

Text Pages 49 to 76.

### Conservation Element

Conservation and Open Space Plan, end of Conservation, Recreation & Open Space Element.

California Archaeological Inventory and Natural Diversity Data Base Appendix D.

Text Pages 77 to 84.

### Open Space Element

Conservation and Open Space Plan, end of Conservation Recreation & Open Space Element.

Text Pages 84 to 93.

### Safety Element

Environmental Hazards Map, end of Community Health & Safety Element.

Seismic Safety Technical Appendix B.

Text Pages 95 to 99.

### Noise Element

Noise Contours Map 1990-2010, end of Community Health & Safety Element.

Noise Technical Appendix C.

Text Pages 99 to 102.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Individual References

Jean Allen, Director, Albany Senior Center, City of Albany.

Lane Bailey, Program Manager, Housing and Community Development Program, Alameda County Planning Department.

Gerald Baptiste, Center for Independent Living, Berkeley, California.

Jacqueline Bernier, Campus Planning Office, University of California, Berkeley.

Jerome Blank, Jerome Blank Reality, Albany.

Dr. Bill Chace, Administrative Director of the Pacific - West Area, USDA, Agricultural Research, Albany.

Ronnie Davis, Branch Manager, Albany Library.

Sally Davis, Citizen Representative, Child Care Committee, City of Albany.

Ruth Dement, Member, Golden Gate Audubon Society, Albany, California.

Daren Fields, Assistant City Administrator, Albany, California.

Karen Folks, Wastewater Control Representative, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), Oakland, California.

Judith Goldsmith, Cordonices Creek Association, Albany.

Henry Hilken, Planner, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, San Francisco.

Steve Granholm, Member, Golden Gate Audubon Society, Albany, California.

Lisa Heschong, Architect, Albany, California.

Susan Hootkins, Senior Regional Planner, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

David Kears, Director of Health Care for Alameda County.

Val Koberlein, Director, Department of Finance, City of Albany.

Mike Koepke, Chief, Fire Department, City of Albany.

Tom Mumley, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Oakland, California.

Michael Munk, Alameda County Planning Department, Hayward.

Larry Murdo, Chief of Police, City of Albany.

Nancy Nelson, Chair, Park and Recreation Committee, City of Albany.

Leo J. O'Brien, Senior Civil Engineer, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) Oakland, California.

John Palmer, Office of Non-Game Heritage, California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California.

Dennis Rivers, Lieutenant, Fire Department, City of Albany.

Joyce Saurman, Secretary to the School Superintendent, Albany Unified School District, City of Albany.

Janet Seltzer, President, Albany Pre-School.

Janice Smith, Business Manager, Albany Unified School District, City of Albany.

Brian Terhorst, California Archeological Inventory, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

Archie Webber, Director of the Landlord-Tenant Assistance Project, Operation Sentinel, Oakland.

Frank Westfall, Assistant Chief, Fire Department, City of Albany.

John Williams, Director of Recreation and Community Services, City of Albany.

### Document References

*A Map Guide of the East Bay Showing BART and Connecting Bus Routes*, BART.

*AC Transit*, Basic Route Map, 1988.

*Air Quality and Urban Development: Guidelines for Assessing Impacts of Project and Plans*, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, November 1985.

*Air Quality Handbook*, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, 1985-86, 1987-88.

*Albany General Plan*, Duncan and Jones, 1975, revised 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1985.

*Albany Hill Specific Plan*, City of Albany, January 1978.

*Albany Waterfront, Draft EIR*, Environ, July 1976.

*Albany Waterfront Lands, Draft EIR and Technical Appendix*, Nichols-Berman, November 1987.

*Albany Waterfront Planning and Feasibility Study*, Environ, July 1976.

*Berkeley Voice*, December 21, 1988.

*Budget for Fiscal Year 1988-89*, City of Albany.

*Census of Population and Housing 1980 Alameda County*, US Bureau of the Census.

*Creek Restoration Program*, Albany Land Use Committee, Neil Havlik, Chair, City of Albany, 1977.

*Comparative Data for California Health Facilities*, California Office of Statewide Health Planning & Development, 1986-87.

*East Bay Express*, December 23, 1988.

*East Bay Heritage*, Mark A. Wilson, California Living, 1979.

*Engineer's Report, Assessment District # 1988-1*, City of Albany, Leptien - Cronin - Cooper, Martinez, California, June 1988.

*Flood Insurance Rate Map*, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Panel Number 0600030002A, 1980.

*A Guide to California Government*, League of Women Voters of California, 1981.

*Homelessness in Alameda County*, Alameda County Taskforce on Homelessness, Report to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, August 1987.

*Homelessness in Alameda County*, Emergency Services Network of Alameda County, Alameda County, California 1988.

*Housing Needs Determinations*, Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), September 1988.

*Housing Vacancy Survey, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties*, Federal Home Loan Bank, San Francisco, California, February 1988.

*Natural Diversity Data Base for the Richmond USGS QUAD*, California Department of Fish and Game, February 1989.

*Newsette*, Fall 1988, Winter & Spring 1989  
Recreation & Community Services Brochures,  
City of Albany.

*Operating Report*, EBMUD Wastewater  
Department Special District #1, FY 1988.

*Parks and Recreation General Plan*, City of  
Albany, October 1973.

*Population and Housing Characteristics for  
California Cities and Counties*, California  
Department of Finance, 1980, 1988.

*Projections 87*, Association of Bay Area  
Governments (ABAG) July 1987.

*Proposal for Development of Affordable  
Housing for Low Income Seniors*, Alameda  
County Housing Program, Alameda County,  
California, October 1988.

*San Francisco Bay Area Regional Transit  
Guide*, Metropolitan Transit Commission,  
1983.

*San Francisco Chronicle/Examiner* January 1,  
1989.

*Stories of Albany*, Albany Historical Society,  
1983.

*University Creek Corridor Design*, Julie Isbill,  
Professional Report for Master of Landscape  
Architecture, University of California,  
Berkeley, 1988.



## GLOSSARY

**Arterial, Major** Relatively high speed (40-50 mph), relatively high capacity roads (up to 50,000 average daily trips) providing access to regional transportation facilities and serving relatively long trips.

**Arterial, Minor** Medium capacity roads (10,000-35,000 average daily trips) which provide intra-community travel and access to the major arterial system. Access to minor arterials should be provided at collector roads and local streets, but some direct access onto arterials exists.

**Below-market-rate (BMR) Housing Unit** Any housing unit specifically priced to be sold or rented to very low, low, or moderate-income households for an amount less than the fair-market rent or value of the unit. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development sets standards for determining which households qualify as "very low income," "low income," or "moderate income."

**Capital Improvements Program** A program, administered by City government and reviewed by Planning Commission, which schedules permanent improvements five or six years into the future to fit the City's projected fiscal capability. The program generally is reviewed annually, and the first year of the program is adopted in the City's annual budget.

**Collector** Relatively low speed (25-30mph), relatively low volume street (5,000-20,000 average daily trips), typically two lanes, which provides circulation within and between neighborhoods. Collectors usually serve relatively short trips and are meant to collect trips from local streets and distribute them to the arterial network.

**Conservation** The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction or neglect.

**Dedication** The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses are often made conditions for City approval of a development.

**Density** The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Density can be controlled through zoning in the following ways: minimum lot-size requirements, floor area ratio, coverage, setback and yard requirements, and limits on units per acre. Maximum allowable density often serves as the major distinction between residential districts.

**Density Bonus** Additional residential units, greater than that which would normally be allowed under land use/zoning regulations, are permitted to a project developer in return for providing some benefit to the City.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** A measure of the intensity of development of commercial structures. The FAR is calculated as the total gross building square footage divided by the project land area. FARs do not include adjacent public streets.

**Flood, 100-Year** The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

**Floodway** The channel or course which the flood waters follow.

**Geologic Review** The analysis of geologic hazards, including all potential seismic hazards, surface ruptures, liquefaction, landsliding, mud-sliding and the potential for erosion and sedimentation.

**Goal** A general, overall, and ultimate purpose toward which the City will direct effort.

**Home Occupation** A commercial activity conducted solely by the occupants of a particular dwelling unit in a manner incidental to residential occupancy.

**Implementation** Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies.

**Inclusionary Zoning** The establishment of incentives (for instance, density bonuses) or standards (for example, linkage of new office construction to residential construction) encouraging construction of units for low and moderate income residents. State law has several provisions requiring that inclusionary zoning be provided.

**Infrastructure** Public services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

**Intensity** The amount of commercial development permitted on parcels. The Plan uses **Floor Area Ratios** to define intensity.

**Local Streets** Low speed, low volume roadways that provide direct access to abutting land uses.

**Low Income Households** Households earning 50-80% of the Bay Area **Median Household Income** as shown on the latest HUD income limit tables.

**Median Household Income** The middle point at which half of the Bay Area households earn more and half earn less.

**Mitigate** To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid to the extent reasonably feasible. According to CEQA, mitigations include: (a) Avoiding an impact by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; (b) Minimizing an impact by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its

implementation; (c) Rectifying an impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the environment affected; (d) Reducing or eliminating an impact by preserving and maintaining operations during the life of the action; (e) Compensating for an impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

**Moderate Income Households** Households earning 80-120% of the **Median Household Income** as shown on the latest HUD income tables.

**Noise Contour** A line connecting points of equal noise level as measured on the same scale. Noise levels greater than the 60 Ldn contour in residential development require noise attenuation.

**Policy** A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions which implies a clear commitment.

**Program** An implementing action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific objective.

**Shall** That which is obligatory or necessary.

**Should** Signifies a directive to be honored in the absence of significant countervailing considerations.

**Standards** Usually refers to site design regulations, such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

**Street Furniture** Those features associated with a street that are intended to enhance that street's physical character, such as benches, kiosks, lights, newspaper racks, and trash receptacles.

**Street Tree Plan** A comprehensive plan for all city street trees which sets goals for tree canopy densities and solar access and sets standards for

species selection, maintenance and replacement criteria, and for planting trees in patterns that will define neighborhood character while avoiding monotony or maintenance problems.

**Use** The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, altered, or enlarged pursuant to the General Plan land use designations and the City's Zoning Ordinance.

**Very Low Income Households** Very low income households are those earning less than 50% of the Bay area **Median Household Income**.

**Zoning** The division of a city by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that carries out policies of the General Plan.









U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES

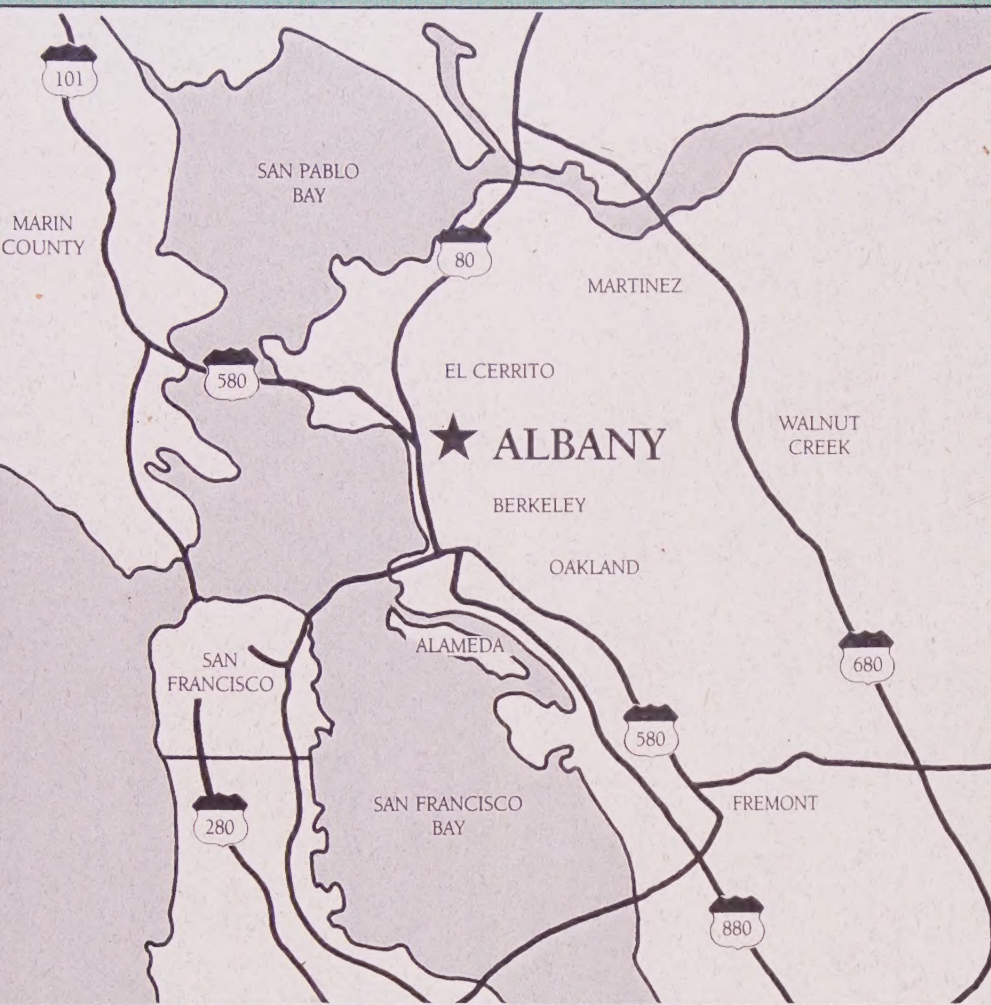


C124913481









## City of Albany

*Administration*  
1000 San Pablo Avenue  
Albany, CA 94706  
(510) 528-5710

*Community Development and  
Environmental Resources*  
1000 San Pablo Avenue  
Albany, CA 94706  
(510) 528-5760



## ALBANY • CALIFORNIA

